Antoine Dakouny

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Abdu'l-Baha's Family

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About

Authentic Information by the Descendants of Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi's Family.

AbdulBahasFamily.org is owned by Parvine Afnan Shahid, a great-granddaughter of Abdu'l-Baha and great-niece of Shoghi Effendi.

The materials on this website were compiled by Parvine and her parents, Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid and Hassan Jalal Shahid, with the help of other descendants of 'Abdu'l-Baha. The purpose of this site is to provide accurate information about the lives and beliefs of the members of Abdu'l-Baha's family, their memories and writings about the Baha'i Faith.

This website is dedicated to the memory of the daughters of Abdu'l Baha:

Zia Khanum, Touba Khanum, Rouha Khanum, Munavar Khanum –

And to Ruhi Mohsen Afnan, a grandson of Abdu'l Baha, and to his lifelong devotion to the teachings and the Baha'i Faith.

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Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid

The mother of Parvine Shahid, the owner of this website, and the writer of a number of the articles therein contained.

Her father, Nayer Ali Afnan, was the son of Sayid Ali Afnan, a member of the Bab's family. He was the grandson of Baha'u'llah, as the son of Foroughyeh Khanum, the daughter of Baha'u'llah, who had married Sayid Ali Afnan.

Shoghi Effendi, appointed by Abdul Baha as the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, was her uncle, brother of her mother, Rouhnguise Rabbani Afnan, granddaughter of Abdul Baha.

Bahiyeh was less than 10 years old when, along with her parents and younger sister, Maliheh, they were excommunicated from the Cause into which they had been born and brought up. Nonetheless, she and her sister were brought up in a purely Bahai atmosphere, were taught their Baha'i prayers, and celebrated Baha'i feasts in the privacy of the family home. They had not been refused permission to visit the Shrines, both in Haifa and Bhaji, as tourists rather than members of the community.

As the whole family of the four daughters of Abdul Baha were members of this excommunicated group, there were a whole number of them living and practicing their faith, in spite of the "judgments" that saw them as outcasts.

Bahiyeh was educated at the English High School in Haifa, followed by three years of study at the Beirut College for Women, and then three more years at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. in the United States, where she earned an MA in political science. She then returned to Beirut where she married Hassan Jalal Shahid in 1964 — another family marriage Shoghi Effendi did not approve of, but it was a happy one nevertheless. Their only child, Parvine Shahid, was born in 1966.

Having lived her whole life through the strange situation where she was a member of the excommunicated family of Abdul Baha's daughters, brought about by Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Bahai Faith, he was her uncle and she his niece, but she never saw him. Instead, she grew up amongst all of his close and extended family members giving her a unique perspective of the circumstances and stories that ruled their lives.

This website was set up by Parvine Shahid to put forward the untold and unreported stories and accounts against the members of the four daughters of Abdul Baha, Zia Khanum, Ruha Khanum, Touba Khanum, and Monawar Khanum, and the treatment meted out to them and to their children by Shoghi Effendi.

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Comments About Munib Shahid

By Hassan Jalal Shahid

I believe religion should be based on love and understanding. I find expulsion so contrary to the Spirit and principles of Bahaism.

I would like to stress – once again – that the daughters and the grandchildren of Abdul-Baha, the Master, broke no Covenant. They loved and respected the Master and could not possibly do anything against his wishes. It is unfair and wrong to call them Covenant Breakers, putting them on a par with Mirza Yahya Azal, the half-brother of Baha'u'llah and Mirza Muhammad Ali, the half-brother of the Master.

Lastly I want to add that every word that [name deleted] has read regarding my brother Dr Munib Shahid of the American University of Beirut (AUB) is wrong and untrue. His wife Serene Husseini was the daughter of Jamal Husseini. He was a notable of Jerusalem, a prominent and respected Palestinian politician who had been exiled by the British to the Seychel Islands and then to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to put an end to his struggle for an independent Palestine. While there, his daughter Serene wanted to get married to my brother Munib Shahid. She contacted her father, Jamal Husseini, for his consent. He did not know who Munib Shahid was and asked a fellow exile from Haifa, Mr Tamimi, about him. Mr Tamimi told him to consider it an honor that the grandson of Abdul-Baha wanted to marry his daughter. On the recommendation, he consented to and blessed the marriage.

Jamal Husseini was a distant relative of Haj Amin Husseini the Mufti of Jerusalem. I do not know whether Haj Amin had spoken out against the Bahai Faith. I know that as the Mufti of Jerusalem he was more of a politician than a Moslem cleric. He had been appointed as Mufti by the first High Comissioner of Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, in the hopes that he would serve the interests of Britain. Instead of doing that, he became a great enemy of Britain and fought for many years for an independent State of Palestine. In the early forties he went to Berlin to join Hitler in the fight against the Allies.

My brother was a sincere and true Bahai and tried many times, until the last years of his life to return to the Cause. In the early fifties he came to Haifa to visit his mother and took the opportunity to contact and meet Mr Abul Ghassem Faizy, one of the Hands of the Cause who was his friend from their student days at the AUB. He was hoping that Mr Faizy could facilitate his return to the community. The meeting made him hopeful that things would eventually work out. That and all the further efforts produced no results. Munib was no Covenant Breaker and died a dissappointed man for having been deprived of something that meant so much to him and in which he sincerely believed.

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Comments About Sayyid Ali Afnan, Forough Khanum, and Their Sons

Narrated by Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid to Her Daughter Parvine

NOTE: Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid is the daughter of Nayer Afnan, son of Sayyid Ali Afnan and Forough Khanum.

…. Among the questions asked was one about my father and his marriage to Rouhanguise Rabbani, Shoghi Effendi's sister.

If Sayyid Ali Afnan had had his differences with the Master these had been resolved and consigned to history during the Master's lifetime – contrary to what Moojan Momen says, that he did not return to the Cause until the early 20s at Shoghi Effendi's time. It was during the lifetime of the Master. Otherwise, how come the Master was so kind and compassionate to his half sister Forough Khanum when at the end of her life she was suffering from breast cancer? How come his daughters and especially Rouha Khanum (your paternal grandmother) were so kind and loving to her till the end of her days? How come Dr. Esselmont lived in that house while in Haifa? How come there are pictures of the Master at that house? How come the Community bought that house and had it beautifully restored as it is now? Would any of this have happened if it was the house or home of a Covenant breaker?

In view of the above it is a laughable joke to say – as it is claimed by some source on the internet – that her sons accused the Master of being the cause of her cancer.

In fact I have heard it said in the family that in those first months after the passing of the Master and when Shoghi Effendi had the breakdown that caused him to leave the scene because he felt unable, ill-equipped or unworthy to assume the daunting task that had been left to him, one of the suggestions had been to send for the sons of Sayyid Ali Afnan who lived in Beirut, Lebanon at the time, to come and lend a hand. This was not actually done but it goes to show that they were not considered Covenant breakers.

Be that as it may, her eldest son, Hossein Afnan, thanks to the Master, (who had recommended him to King Faisal when the latter had come to visit the Master in Haifa) was serving in the government of King Faisal the First of Iraq and where, in close cooperation with Shoghi Effendi (there is correspondence to prove it) tried hard to solve the problem of the takeover by the authorities of Baha'ullah's house in Baghdad. If his parents were covenant breakers and 'enemies of the Master' would Shoghi Effendi have had anything to do with him? Hossein Afnan's efforts did not have a positive outcome, but his work resulted in Shoghi Effendi asking him to resign the high government post that he held so as not to be placed in the position of endorsing that government's action in the case. Hussein refused and was expelled (Moojan Momen, ibid). **(1)**

Regarding her second son, my father Nayer Afnan, he and my mother Rouhanguise Rabbani were married in 1928 in Haifa. The marriage took place in the Master's house and the Master's sister, Bahiyeh Khanum officiated at the ceremony. Present were the Master's wife Mounireh Khanum, the Master's daughters and other members of the family as well as Bahai friends. Would things have happened this way if Nayer Afnan was a covenant breaker? Two years later, 1930, when I was born as the newest baby on the scene, I became special for Khanum (as the Master's sister was called by all the members of the family). She insisted that I carry her name, instead of the one my parents had chosen for me. (The change of names in my birth certificate shows that.) Though we did not live at No. 7 Persian Street she liked me to have my bath there, and if anyone pulled too hard on my tangled hair they were sure to get a slap on the hand.

I have a clear memory of the time when I was six or seven years old and Rouhiyeh Khanum made a rag doll for me. She gave it to me one evening, at the Master's house, in my grandmother Zia Khanum's room. Shoghi Effendi was sitting at a table in the centre of the room, having his dinner. The family were seated on chairs and divans around the room. Of those present I remember my grandmother, my mother and father, my uncle Hossein and others – who, I do not recall. As Shoghi Effendi had his dinner they were discussing things and at one point my father said something that did not seem to meet with the Guardian's satisfaction, but when my uncle Hossein expressed his opinion the Guardian exclaimed 'See, that is how it should be!' I was not happy about my father not making the grade, but I did have a new doll, and yes, something else – I was fascinated by the 'button' that kept going up and down his temple as he chewed on his food. I had never seen that before and my father certainly did not have it. Strange.

If my father was a covenant breaker and the son of a covenant breaker who was 'an arch-enemy of Abdul Baha' would he have been present at that family gathering, discussing things with the Guardian, watching him eat, all alone. Both I and my new doll were hungry, but there was nothing at that table for anyone except for Shoghi Effendi (never uncle Shoghi – I was too scared of him!)

My father, like all the members of the family who were able to do so, served Shoghi Effendi to the best of their ability and capacity. But he was a hard master to please, especially as the rule of the day seems to have been 'Don't think, obey!' Shunning his 'expelled' brother Hossein was one such order, to which my father did not take very kindly.

Then, after years of waiting for an approval that did not come, my aunt Mehranguise Khanum chose to go ahead with her marriage to my uncle Hassan, my father's youngest brother, – working in Iraq, a chemist with the Iraqi oil company. For some reason Shoghi Effendi did not approve of that. I really do not know why. At any rate, he sent my mother, who was medically in no condition to travel on that day, from Haifa to Beirut, to try to convince my aunt not to go to Baghdad to join my uncle. She failed. My aunt got married and my parents bore the brunt of Shoghi Effendi's displeasure. They were thrown out of the Cause and the community, and Bahai's treated them like pariahs. Matters did not improve when Soraya Khanum, Ruhi Afnan's sister, married my father's remaining bachelor brother, Dr. Faizy Afnan (eye surgeon) also living and practicing in Baghdad. He became particularly displeased when he heard that your father and I were going to get married. This last marriage, some thirty years after we had been 'expelled', shunned and considered out of the Bahai circle, brought a sad message to Rouha Khanum, your grandmother. One day, in Haifa, Dr. Lotfulla Hakim, a Hand of the Cause, comes over saying that he has a message for Rouha Khanum from the Guardian, and insisted on seeing her alone. The message to this daughter of the Master now in her seventies and an invalid who spent most of her time in bed was that if you, as Hassan Shahid's mother, permit this marriage with Bahiyeh, the daughter of Nayer Afnan to go ahead, I will not allow any Bahais to walk in your funeral. Unfortunately, since we 'disobeyed' and went ahead and got married, we never found out whether any Bahais would have walked in the funeral of a daughter of the Master who had been declared a covenant breaker, shunned by Bahais for over thirty years because her husband, the son of the King of Martyrs, who had succeeded in purchasing the various shares of the many owners who had inherited the Mansion of Bahji from its original owner; had convinced Mr. Mousa Bahai, eldest son of Mirza Mohammad Ali to kindly vacate the mansion and hand over the keys, after decades of living there, having refused the financial compensation that had been offered; found himself on the wrong side of the equation when on the day that Abul Qassem, the gardener at the Shrine of the Bab committed suicide, (for God knows what reason), he had arranged with a German gardener to come and prune his vines. **(2)** Shortly thereafter, Aliyasghar, a faithful old servant from the times of the Master, came with the message from the Guardian that Mirza Jalal should no longer go to the meetings at the Shrine of the Bab. That was the situation when Mirza Jalal's eldest son, Dr. Munib Shahid married a Moslem lady (Being out of the Cause what Bahai girl would have married him?) Now matters came to a head and cables were sent.

For some strange reason my father was designated by Shoghi Effendi (see Moojan Momen, ibid) as the plotter and schemer behind most of these marriages. His was the evil hand that wove this mesh of marriages, connecting generations of 'covenant breakers' with one another, serving sinister schemes that took shape seemingly nowhere but in the Guardian's mind. He simply could not see a group of cousins and relatives from a family that considered themselves Bahais in every sense of the word, but completely cut off from their roots and their natural milieu. Was it not natural that they should choose each other when they sought husbands and wives?

NOTES:

(1) It is reminiscent of Shoghi Effendi requiring Neimatullah Fallah of Iskandarun, Turkey to resign his post of Honorary Iranian Consul in that city.

Mr Fallah was a wealthy Iranian Bahai merchant who lived in Iskandarun. When Iranians wanted to travel from Iran to Europe, one way was to travel overland to Iskandarun and from there to catch a boat to Europe. When there, Mr Fallah was someone to turn to if they needed any help with their affairs or their travel plans and that at the same time he was always ready to extend hospitality and kindness to his fellow coutrymen. Some of the travellers, upon their return to Iran reported to the authorities in Tehran. As a result, the Iranian government asked their Ambassador in Istanbul to go and meet and offer him the post of Honorary Consul of Iran in Iskandarun. When Mr Fallah heard the news he refused the offer, saying that extending help and hospitality to the travellers was a pleasure and no official title was necessary. The Ambassador however, did not give up and by chance was told, by a friend, that there was a gentleman in Haifa called Abbas Effendi whom Mr Fallah both loved and respected so much that if he told him to throw himself in the sea he would do so. The Ambassador wrote to the Master who in turn wrote to Fallah telling him that he should accept the post as it would only be a source of benefit for the community. Thereupon Mr Fallah accepted the post. Many years later Shoghi Effendi asked him to resign his post. Mr Fallah wrote back saying that he considered the Master request to accept the post an order from his “Mowla” (Master) and as such could not relinquish it. Shoghi Effendi promptly expelled him and all his family (wife, sons and daughter).

Years later, upon the advice and encouragement of Ruhi Afnan, the family which had remained true to their Bahai faith and beliefs asked to be returned to the Cause. Their request was granted in the early 1960’s by the House Of Justice – after Shoghi Effendi.

I clearly remember Ruhi Afnan saying that when requesting a return to the community one should not include a “request for forgiveness” for no one can forgive but God. That point has remained very clearly in my mind.

A similar situation arose with Mirza Habibullah Howeyda who had the title of Eyn ul Mulk. He was a very devout Bahai and a close personal friend of your grandfather Mirza Jalal Shahid (the son of the King of Martyrs, the son-in-law of the Master). Eyn ul Mulk was a diplomat serving as the Iranian representative to mandated Syria and Lebanon and later Iranian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. The Master encouraged him in his diplomatic endeavours and followed his career with interest, considering it beneficial to the community to have Bahais in high posts.

Mr Howeyda (who was the father of the last Prime Minister under the Shah) and his family regularly came to visit the Shrines and stayed at your grandfather’s house at No. 9 Persian Street which was adjacent to the Masters house at No. 7.

In the 1930s Shoghi Effendi decided that Bahais should not take part in politics and ordered Eyn ul Mulk to resign, just as he had done with Mr Fallah. Both of them refused to do so on the grounds that the Master had advised them and encouraged them in their careers.

Your father has often told me that when Ein ul Mulk was “expelled”, Shoghi Effendi ordered your grandfather to cut all ties with him. It was very difficult for your grandfather to do so because he was one of his closest friends. Nevertheless he obeyed and wrote to Eyn ul Mulk telling him the facts.

Your father now takes up the narrative saying: “In the early 1950s I travelled to Turkey. I had to go to the Iranian Embassy in Ankara to renew my passport. At the time, Amir Abbas Howeyda, Eyn ul Mulks son, was Chancellor at the Embassy. He arranged matters for me and insisted that I go to dinner as his mother would very much like to see me. At dinner Mr Howeyda’s widow, who was a Qajar princess and an ardent Moslem, asked me why her late husband had been ‘expelled’. She said that he was such a staunch Bahai that he made her promise that when he died to have him buried in the Bahai cemetry in Acre. His wishes had been carried out.

Years later, when her son became the Prime Minister of the Shah (and served as such for 13 years after which he was executed at the hands of the Islamic Republic) his enemies in Iran insisted that he was a Bahai, though this was not the case. However to prove their point they sent people to Acre to find his father's grave to stamp the accusation upon the son. Amir Abbas Howeyda told me personally, that though his father was a sincere Bahai, he himself was an agnostic and a non-believer in either Islam or the Bahai Faith."

(2) The story of the purchase of the Mansion of Bahji by Mirza Jalal and how it was willingly vacated by the family of Bahaullah who had been living there for decades, will be recounted soon….

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Fuad Afnan

In 1938 Fuad Afnan, the younger brother of Ruhi Afnan, decided to continue his studies at the Imperial College in London, having graduated from the American University of Beirut. Before leaving, he asked Zia Khanum (Shoghi Effendi's mother) whether the Guardian would have any objections. Her answer was "why would he have any objections to his continuing his studies in the UK?"

While in London, Fuad was an active member of the Baha'i community and attended the weekly meetings.

He had volunteered to become an Air Raid Warden when the war broke out in 1939. In 1941, during one of these air raids he was hit by a bomb and killed.

Hassan Balyuzi, a Hand of the Cause, sent a cable to the Guardian informing him of the tragedy. The Guardian sent a messenger to Fuad's mother, Touba Khanum, Shoghi Effendi's aunt, to convey the news.

Shoghi Effendi posthumously excommunicated Fuad Afnan, even though he had been a loyal Baha'i his entire life.

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Hassan Jalal Shahid

Hassan Jalal Shahid (1916-2015)

He was the last of the 13 grandchildren of Abdul Baha and the great-grandchildren of Baha'u'llah to leave us.

Due to circumstances over which he had no control, he did not play any role in the affairs of the Baha'i Community, despite his closeness to its founders, Baha'u'llah (his great-grandfather), and Shoghi Effendi (his cousin).

Once, when his mother, Rouha Khanum, had the temerity to ask Shoghi Effendi what Hassan's fault was that he was shunted out of the Cause, Shoghi Effendi's answer was that he "smoked too many cigarettes!" Hassan had not yet married me (Shoghi Effendi's niece), but soon that plan was – in Shoghi Effendi's opinion – a better sword of Damocles to hang over his head.

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Home

Introduction by Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid, Great-Granddaughter of Abdu'l-Baha

Maybe the series of accusations made against all the members of Abdul Baha's family over the last seventy years have gone unanswered for too long. A pattern has been established in Bahai circles based in Haifa, Israel and spread over the globe that any accusation aimed at the family holds true – after all they have come from the highest Bahai sources and, what is equally important, no one had denied them. Not once! In fact, the various members of the family, cast out at various times – 'expelled', to use the 'accepted' term, – from the community, made a conscious and deliberate decision not to contradict anything said, especially as they were first said by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi who, as the eldest grandson of Abdul Baha and his appointed successor, was an integral part of that same family. Nobody, but nobody, wanted to start arguments and launch upon conflicts reminiscent of what went on at the time of Baha'ullah and Abdul Baha with their various half brothers. They therefore never communicated any information regarding their 'expulsion' from the religion and the community that their forebears had established – at great price and sacrifice – or their opinions on the whys and wherefores of the tragedy that befell them. They repeatedly insisted that their silence would serve the Cause better and would ward off another schism in the third generation of Baha'ullah's family.

Soon, however, the number of participants in the field of blame and accusation grew. The books of Rouhiyyih Rabbani, the wife of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, of which *The Priceless Pearl* is one, published in 1969 (after the passing away of the Guardian) and that of Adib Taherzadeh (1992) depicted the family in ways too demeaning to repeat, but nevertheless, in Bahai circles, were considered good sources of information to be repeatedly referred to as reference books. Both books are highly regarded in Bahai circles. After all the first writer was the widow of the Guardian, and had had direct input in the running of the affairs of the Cause until her death in 2000 and the other had been a member of the House of Justice for many years.

No one, however, of all those who had been literally libelled and insulted, raised their voices to deny anything, refute anything, rectify anything or defend themselves in any way. Their silence made them appear as if they were actually guilty of all that had been thrown at them. Of course, not one voice was raised to appreciate the sacrifice their deliberate silence afforded the Cause in leaving them free of any of the unseemly conflict and disagreements that had gone on in the previous two generations. No, the Cause was left free and unopposed as it went on naming, blaming and shaming one victim after another. It soon reached the stage where it was claimed that no family existed. One of its glaring examples, and there were many, was a notice in the *Independent* (a British newspaper) of November 9, 1993 regarding a luncheon held by Mr. Sarosh Zaiwalla, Senior Partner, Zaiwalla & Co, Solicitors, 95a Chancery Lane. London WC2 'in honour of Madam Ruhiyyih Rabbani, the last surviving member of the family of Bahaullah, the founder of the Bahai faith'. Another was the two different occasions when a friend at College introduced my daughter Parvine Shahid to a Bahai classmate as a member of the family of Abdul Baha and the blunt answer came that there was no family! A third was an answer given some years ago by Ali'ullah Nakhjavani while visiting Australia and speaking to a Bahai audience. There he asserted that the Aghsans had simply ceased to exist because like the branch of a tree they had been cut out of existence!

With the advent of the internet the mind boggles at the amount of material being aired against so-called 'covenant breakers' from the belated family of Abdul Baha. They are listed in detail and their stories told and retold. One example is the publication on the Baha'i Reference Library of Shoghi Effendi's cables to the Baha'i World from 1950 – 1957. Another is Moojan Momen's 'Covenant, The, and Covenant-breaker' in Baha'i Library Online, and an article on 'Covenant Breaking' from Bahaikipedia. Hung out like a lot of laundry, clean or dirty, true or false, for all the world to see.

Be that as it may, the number of inaccuracies in the accounts are most disturbing and it seems only appropriate that before the last of the third generation of Abdul Baha's family, his grandson, Hassan Jalal Shahid (the son of Mirza Jalal Isphahani, – the son of Sultan esh Shuhada – and Rouha Khanum one of the daughters of Abdul Baha) goes to meet his maker, taking many of the versions of the family stories into oblivion, an effort should be made to rectify the balance. For truth to tell, not only was judgement passed and the guilty verdict handed down, the stories that are now on the internet for everyone to read are heavily embellished with 'facts' that happen to be as fictitious as any fiction can be. The Master loved and respected his daughters very much. To see them bandied about as 'covenant breakers' is deeply hurtful. The Master had high hopes that his grandchildren, all of whom, males and females, had been highly educated, would spend their lives in the service of the Cause as Ruhi Afnan started to do. He, though, like everyone else, 'generation after generation' was deprived of that opportunity.

The family knew that Shoghi Effendi had passed horrendous judgements on them. They were aware of Rouhiyyih Khanum's book *The Priceless Pearl* and the turns and twists given to many of the stories and opinions there. They knew of Adib Taherzadeh's book *The Covenant of Baha'ullah* and its shameless chapter on the Faithless Relatives of Shoghi Effendi. But to see the accusations and the judgements on the internet and distorted to such an extent is truly astonishing!

In an effort to correct some of these, shall we say, misconceptions, and to try to put things in their proper perspective, this effort is now being made to present a different light on this tragic family history. It goes without saying that it will meet with some strange reactions from those safe and secure 'in the fold', and for a very simple reason, well illustrated by the following story.

Dr. Moojan Moomen, a well informed, well established writer on Bahai history and Bahai matters, has official permission from the House of Justice to come and visit us. At a recent meeting on December 5, 2011 he made a statement that prompted me to write the following letter to him on April 3, 2012:

> *Dear Dr. Momen:*
>
> *Towards the end of our last meeting you said something that has remained with me. You thought that if Baha'is should listen to me and to what I had to say it would shake their faith. The next day, — it took me a few hours of sleep to recover from our absorbing, eight hour session — the question came to mind: 'shake their faith in what?' Could any amount of talking anyone heard from me or Hassan shake anyone's faith in the core principles, ideals, or world view of the Bab or Bahaullah? Could anything you have heard us say shake a Baha'i's faith in the definition of a Baha'i? In the purpose and goal of a Baha'i's existence; the end towards which he should strive; the compassion, love and understanding with which he should seek to serve humanity; the ingrained spirituality and godliness that should be his guiding light; the responsibility, kindness and forgiveness that can move mountains and build a new world? Have you ever heard Hassan or I say anything that would shake a Baha'i's faith in any of these?*
>
> *What might shake their faith is the discrepancy between the 'facts' as they are compiled and presented on the internet, on sources such as Bahai Library on-line, Bahaikepedia, the planned Bahai encyclopedia, a variety of articles, and what actually happened. In my humble opinion, it would serve the Cause far better if more care is taken to make sure that these 'facts' were actually factual. In fact it would be much better to do without a great many of these articles and compilations altogether. What are you afraid of? Why does the Cause require so much fending off of 'enemies'? They have always been there and will probably always be there. But does a Cause such as this need anything more than the luminous message it brought? Does it need 'propaganda' beyond its own words of wisdom and spiritual enlightenment?*
>
> *Historians allowed too many witnesses and participants in the events of the time to die without interviewing a single one of them, or finding out firsthand what actually happened, how and why. They were so busy categorizing covenant breakers and*

> *shunning them that history passed them by. What you are now left with are regurgitated accounts of events that often have little to do with how things actually were.*
>
> *The Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, held the will of Abdul Baha aloft and with what he interpreted as the Master's blessings, set out to make the institution of Guardianship a jewel mounted in a framework of complete conformity, total obedience and unswerving loyalty to the authority heading the Cause, whether the Guardian or the Universal House of Justice – not forgetting that together they were divinely guided and infallible. However, like all man-run institutions, no matter how sacred in origin, these are stepping stones in a certain direction, not eternal edifices never to be questioned or changed.*
>
> *Maybe when you said I or Hassan could shake a Baha'i's faith you meant faith in what these institutions brought forth, did or decided, notwithstanding their infallibility. If a Bahai believes in all this what would shake his faith: my words or what in his/her name and the name of the Bahai Faith, is being said to the world now on the internet, – coming from official Baha'i sources? Ironically, what is put on the internet – that 'curse' as you called it – should, considering how many 'enemies, battles, conflicts, expellees, covenant breakers, faithless, disloyal, treacherous, arch-enemies, plotters and schemers are mentioned, all relating to the family of Abdul Baha and Shoghi Effendi, be enough to shake anyone's faith. And that is exactly what I am talking about. If you wish to hang the families of Abdul Baha and Shoghi Effendi like washing on a line on the internet, at least have your facts right. I do not believe it serves any cause, leave alone the Cause of Bahaullah to have the names of the descendants of Abdul Baha and the immediate family of the Guardian so besmirched with mud, which, upon closer scrutiny, simply does not stick. When one fact is shown to be incorrect it casts doubt on the whole body of work. How much more when 'fact' after 'fact' is not correct?*
>
> *That is what shakes a believer's faith. When those who should know better ignore the truth, a truth that always, somehow, has the habit of putting on an appearance.*
>
> *Sincerely,*
>
> *Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid*

Introduction Part 2: Names and Branches of the Family

Before proceeding further it might be useful to note that all members of the Bab's family were named and known as the *Afnans*, whereas Baha'ullah named his sons as the *Aghsan* (branches) of his family and the ladies of the household as the *waraqat* (leaves). His eldest daughter, Bahiyeh Khanum was called the Most Exalted Holy Leaf, and the Master's ['Abdu'l-Baha's] wife, Munireh Khanum, whose original name had been Fatemeh he renamed as Munireh (luminous). The Master, who was his eldest son and was called Abbas was given the extra title of Ghusneh Azam (The Greatest Branch). Another son (from a different wife) Mirza Mohammad Ali was named as Ghusneh Akbar (The Greater Branch); and the Master's younger brother, Mirza Mehdi was named Ghusneh Athar (The Purest Branch).

The appellation of *Ghusn* (branch) was also given to Shoghi Effendi by the Master and he was known as Ghusneh Mumtaz (The Most Exalted Branch). *Effendi*, on the other hand, was a word very commonly used, equivalent to 'mister' in English. So if you wanted to be polite you affixed Effendi to the names of men as a gesture of politesse. All the men of the family, young and old, used to be addressed as effendis, both by the Iranians and the Arabs in Haifa, but it remained with Shoghi Effendi all through his life. According to the practice of the time the Master had insisted that everyone should address the young man, even from his childhood, not as plain Shoghi, but Shoghi Effendi.

The Aghsan (plural of ghusn) were therefore known as the family of Bahau'llah, and the Afnans the family of the Bab. The two families soon joined up at the marriage of Forough Khanum, the only child of Baha'ullah and his third wife, Gowhar Khanum, to Sayyid Ali Afnan, the son of Afnaneh Kabir (The Great Afnan) the brother-in-law of the Bab. This was repeated when Zia Khanum and Touba Khanum, two of the Master's daughters, married Afnans as well, the latter to another son of Afnaneh Kabir, Mirza Mohsen Afnan, the former to Mirza Hadi Shirazi (Afnan).

This happened again in the next generation, when three of the four sons of Forough Khanum, Nayer, Feizy and Hassan married Rouhanguise and Mehranguise, the two sisters of Shoghi Effendi (who all were half Aghsan and half Afnan), and a cousin of his, Soraya Afnan, who married Feizy Afnan.

Of the nine children born to Abdul Baha and his wife Monireh Khanum only four daughters survived. All four were educated at home and were fluent in Farsi, Arabic and English. They were Zia Khanum, Touba Khanum, Rouha Khanum and Munavar Khanum. Touba Khanum and Rouha Khanum were unidentical twins.

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- Click here to view historical photos of the family.

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Hossein Rabbani

Hossein Effendi Rabbani

The older of Shoghi Effendi’s two brothers, Hossein was, like Shoghi Effendi, educated at The Jesuit College des Freres in Haifa and then went on to the American University in Beirut. After graduation he launched into the service of the Guardian, being at his beck and call over a myriad of things, ranging from the secretarial to the bearer of grave messages to the members of the community. Of Shoghi Effendi’s siblings maybe he was the most submissive, obedient and ready to comply with the sometimes difficult tasks set for him by his brother. I remember my husband (and his cousin) Hassan Shahid once asking him how he had the heart and the courage to give people the message that the Guardian wanted them to leave their country, their home and their means of livelihood and relocate in some new country. “ It was my duty to give the message, not to question the whys and wherefores,” was his answer. One such message went to Ibrahim Zein who was working in a Bank in Haifa, had a responsible job, was well respected and well-liked. The Guardian ordered him and his family to go to Egypt. With heavy hearts, they obeyed and complied. Once there it proved very difficult to find employment and their savings soon came to an end. Unable to manage, they were forced to return to Haifa where the Bank was only too willing to take him back. The Guardian, however, saw it differently and Ibrahim Zein and all his family were “expelled.”

Eventually, my uncle Hossein did not manage to remain in the good books of his brother. One evening, while passing through Persian Street by chance, my father Nayer Afnan witnessed a scene that confirmed that very clearly. Shoghi Effendi was at the window of his living quarters, on the second floor of the Andaroon, ordering Mansoor, his henchman, to go on beating his brother Hossein at the entrance courtyard of No. 7 Persian Street. This, Mansoor was doing with gusto, and had my father not arrived to pull the two apart, God only knows what the outcome would have been. Soon thereafter my uncle Hossein became a resident of Karm, the small house on the slopes of Mt. Carmel that my grandfather had. Eventually, my grandmother and my uncle Riaz joined the family there. When the turn of my aunt Mehranguise came to leave the Andaroon, she rented a small apartment not far from Karm. We, in the meantime, were living on Prophet Street and therefore family get-togethers were possible. I still have a pair of silver filigree earrings that my uncle Hossein gave me one afternoon while celebrating my birthday. This was in the early 1940s. Many years later, when Hassan and I visited him in Germany in the early 1960s (where he then lived with his German wife and his daughter Zia) he told us that one of the great consolations of his exile from the community and the Faith, was spending hours reading a collection of the tablets of Baha’u’llah and Abdul Baha that he had. They were his only contact with both his religious convictions, his community, and his mother tongue.

Talk of sadness, of exile, of desolation…

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Maryam Jalal Shahid

The eldest daughter of Rouha Khanum and Mirza Jalal Shahid, Maryam’s mother was the daughter of Abdul Baha, her father the son of Sultan’ul Shuhada (The King of Martyrs, thus named by Baha’u’llah).

By the time she was in her late teens, she had developed into a very presentable, well-read, dignified young lady who was not only intelligent but one of the two most beautiful granddaughters of the Master. (The other was my mother, Rouhanguise Rabbani Afnan). Enamoured of education, as were all the grandchildren of the Master – who had actively encouraged it for both male and female members of the family – she ended up, in the early thirties, at the Sorbonne in Paris.

Destiny, however, played havoc with any plans she had, or that the Master had made for her when she was stricken with Hodgkin’s disease, a form of cancer, which in her case, proved fatal. It had been the Master’s wish that she should marry her cousin, Shoghi Effendi, whom the Master, unknown to anyone, had in his Will, appointed as his successor and the Guardian of the Baha’i Faith. His eyes, however, had roamed in other directions, specifically to Mary Maxwell, the daughter of a Canadian couple, May and Sutherland Maxwell. May Maxwell had met the Master on one of his trips to the New World, when, captivated by both his message and his personality, she had converted to the Bahai Faith, later to be followed by her husband. They had come, with their daughter, to Haifa, where Shoghi Effendi had met Mary, and according to his brother Hossein, he had fallen in love with her.

However, Maryam and the Master’s plans stood in the way.
Originally, Maryam had been given six months to live, but, thanks to the treatment she received in Paris and later in Beirut by a first-class Jewish doctor who had escaped from Nazi Germany, and who, before leaving for the United States worked at the American University Hospital in Beirut, she lived in the shadow of cancer for a good ten years, suffering the recurring fevers, the fatigue, the weakness and the glands that swelled time after time, requiring more radiation treatment. To his credit, something that my husband Hassan Shahid, Maryam’s younger brother, always granted him, Shoghi Effendi did not marry Mary Maxwell until Maryam had been pronounced incurable. It was only then that he went ahead and married the woman he loved. In the early forties, Maryam finally succumbed to the cancer that had bedevilled her life. Maybe a blessed release for her, but it left her mother a victim of life-long depression and her father a broken man. Not that losing a child was an unusual source of sorrow, but, for reasons better known to himself, Shoghi Effendi had dealt harshly with Maryam’s parents, as he had with the rest of the family, and his ‘displeasure’ resulted in the estrangement and expulsion of the various members, including Maryam’s parents, from a community of which they had not only been an integral part, but to which they had been devoted, heart and soul and which they considered an honour to serve.

Shoghi Effendi, however, did not see it that way. For him, devotion or service to the Cause meant unthinking obedience and unquestioning acceptance of what he saw as his ‘bequeathed’ right, granted by the Master’s unstinting praise and granting of powers in his Will.

If one is permitted to differ, in my humble opinion, Shoghi Effendi was human – this before the Baha’is decided to consider the Master (who deliberately called himself Abdul Baha, the servant, if not the slave of Baha), Shoghi Effendi, and the House of Justice as ‘infallible’ beings or institution that could do no wrong. Shoghi Effendi was a human being, to whom great power was given to run the affairs of the Cause in conjunction with an elected House of Justice over which he was to preside. These were the terms of his appointment as specified in the Master’s Will. During his lifetime there was no House of Justice, but Hands of the Cause, whom he chose and appointed and could remove at will, and of which his wife and father-in-law became members. Consultation, checks and balances, as conceived by the Master, do not seem to have been the order of the day. Under the circumstances, is it too farfetched to say that it was too much to manage in a rational and dispassionate way?

Married to a lady described by a historian of the Cause (who shall remain nameless but who certainly knew what he was talking about) as ‘strong’, they were also childless, because she was unable to bear children, and therefore unable to produce a son for Shoghi Effendi to appoint as his heir, as the Master’s Will specified. On the way, they made sure that no member of the family remained on the scene either to participate in the service of the Cause or possibly to succeed him, for it had been incumbent on him, as specified in the Aqdas, to write a will and as specified by the Master’s Will, to name a successor. After Shoghi Effendi’s death in 1957, even though a House of Justice was finally elected and brought into being, Ruhiyyih Khanum, nee Mary Maxwell, entitled Amatul Baha (Handmaid of Glory), seemed to have been in control of matters and as her book *The Priceless Pearl* shows, made decisions and passed judgements on both the members of the family of Abdul Baha and the members of the Baha’i community. All of this was a much greater blow to Maryam’s parents than the loss of their daughter, heavy as that was. Elderly, alone, ostracised by members of their natural milieu, the Baha’i community, they bore their grief in dignified silence until the end of their lives.

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Mehranguise Rabbani Afnan

Mehr: love, kindness
Anguise: mainspring, source of

The second of the two daughters of Mirza Hadi Shirazi (Afnan) and Zia Khanum, (the eldest daughter of the Master) was educated in Haifa, Paris and London, and grew up to be an attractive, fun-loving young lady of charm and wit who loved life and sought to live it to the full. Her bright dark eyes, shining with humour and vitality, were the most attractive features of her face and set her apart from her more serious, sedate sister and female cousins.

She was the youngest sister of Shoghi Effendi. He had reluctantly accepted that his eldest sister, Rouhanguise, had married Nayer Afnan, but when Mehranguise sought to marry Nayer Afnan's youngest brother, Hassan Afnan, he balked at the idea. In an effort to offset that, he sought to bring his position and influence to bear by practicing the traditional age-old custom of arranging the marriages of his siblings and cousins. He therefore ordained that his sister Mehranguise should marry their cousin, Munib Shahid (a full-fledged doctor practicing and teaching at the American University Hospital in Beirut) and who was the eldest son of Mirza Jalal and Rouha Khanum; and that his brother Hussein should marry Zahra, Munib's sister. Needless to say, neither of the four named were interested. However, Mirza Jalal and Rouha Khanum were all in favour, since they were greatly disturbed by the icy 'froideur' that had set in with their relations with Shoghi Effendi, and they thought that these marriages might breach the divide which, as the Persian saying goes, caused their 'saddles to be askew.' That order and that dream, however, remained unrealised.

This time, though, Shoghi Effendi had overstepped the mark. He could, and later did, order people to leave home and livelihood and move to other countries and towns, and Baha'is either obeyed or disobeyed, at the risk of expulsion from the community. However, telling siblings and cousins of his own generation, simply because he was the Guardian of the Faith, to marry and spend their lives with people they were not interested in – no matter how good or worthy they were – seemed to be going too far. Nor had he set the example himself. According to the wishes of the Master, his grandfather, he was supposed to marry his cousin Maryam, the beautiful and talented daughter of Rouha Khanun. He, however, had set his eyes on Mary Maxwell, and the wishes of his grandfather were conveniently forgotten, aided and abetted by nothing less than the cancer from which Maryam came to suffer while a student at the Sorbonne. With that as his ally, he waited until she was declared incurable to go ahead and marry the woman he loved.

I very well remember the room that my aunt Mehranguise occupied in the Master's house at No. 7 Persian St. She was not one to sit and twiddle her thumbs. She assiduously studied German because she had very good German Jewish friends who encouraged her to do so, and she was often busy knitting things for me and my younger sister Maliheh. She loved to travel and whenever circumstances permitted, did so. I very well recall the trip she and my mother took to Paris just before the second World War taking me along with them. Since they were planning to stay for several months they put me in school and thus laid the foundations of the French I eventually learnt to speak. They too, made very good use of their time in Paris, going to numerous concerts and opera performances, attending lectures and of course, going round the shops. I fondly remember a dressing gown that my mother had bought on that trip. It was cornflower blue in colour had the softest marabout feathers for sleeves, coming down to the elbow. Over the years my mother rarely wore it, but years later, when, as a teenager, I wanted to feel elegant I would wear it and prance around in front of the full-length mirror in our bedroom! But I never saw it again after we left Haifa for Beirut in 1948, when the Arab Israeli dispute was at its height. All our household furniture and belongings in Haifa were taken to our house in Bahji (adjoining the Shrine of Baha'u'llah) which had originally been part of the home of my grandfather Sayyed Ali Afnan and his wife Forough Khanum, (the daughter of Baha'u'llah). During our absence, thanks to Mansoor, the Guardian's henchman, the house was broken into and looted and which, according to a surveyor friend who saw the house soon after, looked as if a hurricane had paid a visit.*

But to return to my aunt. After the marriage of Shoghi Effedi's eldest sister Rouhanguise (my mother) to my father Nayer Afnan – a marriage he did not favour, nor did he forbid – Mehranguise and my father's youngest brother Hassan decided that they wanted to get married. But first they had to get the consent of Shoghi Effendi. That consent was never forthcoming. Just the opposite, he devised the plan of who should marry whom according to his wishes. That too did not work. All this time she was still living at No.7 Persian Street where life was becoming tense and uncomfortable. Undaunted, she left and rented an apartment not far from Karm, her father's simple home on the slopes of Mt. Carmel to which he had retired and where, aided by his faithful gardener/servant Shehadeh, he had planted a lovely garden in his inimitable Shirazi style. After a while, tired of waiting for a permission that was simply not forthcoming, she decided to take matters into her own hands, left Haifa for Beirut to await my uncle. Hearing of this Shoghi Effendi ordered my mother (his sister Rouhanguise) to go to Beirut to dissuade her. My mother failed in her mission.

Both she and my aunt Mehranguise were ”expelled” together with my father, myself and my younger sister Maliheh.

Married to Hassan Afnan, a chemist working with the Iraqi Petroleum Company (IPC) in Baghdad she lived a happy life there, made many friends, brought up her son Hussein, who eventually studied at the Architectual Association in London graduating as an architect and later topped that up with a degree in landscape architecture from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

When my uncle retired from the IPC they moved to Paris where they spent the last years of their lives.

Neither my aunt nor my uncle ever gave up their Bahai beliefs and faith, and like all the members of Abdul Baha's family, I repeat, ALL the members of that family, "excommunicated" by Shoghi Effendi for various reasons, never became Moslems or members of other faiths. Yes, they associated with Moslems, Christians and Jews, and any others, they befriended them and dealt with them, but they never gave up their deep rooted Bahai beliefs and deepest commitments.

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*Thanks to the Iranian government that had arranged for Iranians that had resided in what became Israel in 1948, to return home, my father, Nayer Afnan, lodged a complaint with the Israeli authorities regarding the break-in and looting of a house adjacent to the Shrine of Baha'u'llah. The result of the official investigation was that it was an 'inside job' where neither Arabs nor Jews were involved.

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Munavar Khanum

The youngest surviving daughter of Abdul Baha and Munireh Khanum (four out of nine). She was intelligent, had a wonderful sense of humour, and tremendous self-confidence. She loved to travel, meet people, and enjoy life, things that her husband, Mirza Ahmad Yazdi, had provided for her. Sadly, the couple remained childless. Ahmad Bey, as he was known, had been appointed honorary consul of Iran in Port Said where his main business was. They remained there until Abdul Baha passed away, whereupon the ladies of the household in Haifa asked her and her husband to come to Haifa and help with the running of the affairs of the Cause until Shoghi Effendi felt that he could take matters in hand. This they willingly did. (see Ruhi Afnan's letter to the Spiritual Assembly of Tehran 1970)

In her later years, she was the only daughter of Abdul Baha who was still in the Cause and lived at the Master's house, now the home of Shoghi Effendi and his wife Ruhiyyih Khanum.

One afternoon, while some members of the family, including my father and my late husband Hassan Shahid, were at Touba Khanum's house, Munavar Khanum suddenly arrived upset and worried. She said that Ruhiyyih Khanum was pressuring her to donate everything she had to the Cause, not after her death, but right away during her lifetime. This had caused her a great deal of anguish as she was worried that she might one day, like her sisters, be "expelled" as well and asked to leave the Andaroun (as the family home was called), and she would have nothing to fall back on. At the time, Zia Khanum had been "expelled" and was living at her husband's small home on Mount Carmel, and Touba Khanum was also "expelled" because her daughter Soraya had married Dr. Faizy Afnan, son of Forough Khanum (daughter of Baha'u'llah) and Sayed Ali Afnan.

Munavar Khanum, not wanting to give over her property during her lifetime and by going to see her sister Touba Khanum, was summarily "expelled" from the community. She spent the last years of her life in hotels, and finally at the Italian hospital in Haifa. Soraya, her niece, kept an eye on her and a maid came daily to attend to her and to take her out for drives.

I remember visiting her with my mother on one of my visits to Haifa. She was elderly and not very mobile, but her spirits were young. With a twinkle in her blue eyes and a lovely smile on her face, she started asking my mother whether she remembered an incident in which they were both involved in Egypt and which, at the time, had caused a lot of merriment. However, at that point, lunch arrived and I never heard the story that had brought back amusing memories of the past.

She died in 1971 at that same hospital.

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Munib Jalal Shahid

Munib Jalal Shahid (1908-1973)

Abdul Baha, Munib's grandfather, had encouraged the young Munib's wishes to become a doctor by telling him that he would "not only cure people's physical ailments but their spiritual ills as well." As a result of hard work, diligence, and total dedication to his chosen profession, he ended up as a prominent doctor at the American University Hospital of Beirut (AUH), Lebanon, where he had originally trained and later taught. He became Chairman of hematology and oncology departments at the Faculty of Medicine. While at the AUH, and before his marriage, Munib was active in the promotion of the Baha'i Cause. His lineage, deep convictions, warmth and charm, made him ideally suited for the endeavour, but Shoghi Effendi put an end to that aspect of his life when he excommunicated him, his parents, and his siblings upon his marriage to a non-Baha'i lady.

Munib did not write books or articles about the Baha'i Cause – he lived it. He, like all the members of the family of Abdul Baha, had been deprived of participation in a community and a milieu to which he had naturally belonged, and longed to be a part of – a dream, a vision, an idea that was not to be realised in this world – maybe in the next. For his great-grandfather, Baha'u'llah, had declared, "I made death for you as tidings of good news." I will never forget his great surprise when an elderly patient of his had shown great fear, realizing that he was at the door of bidding farewell to this world.

"Why?" asked Munib. "Why this fear?"

After Munib's sudden death from a heart attack, in 1973, his wife, Sereen Hosseini, set up a memorial fund to help medical students from the AUB, who could not afford it, to specialise in different medical disciplines. The funds were for a five-year specialisation in US medical schools, after which, they would come back to work at the AUH in Beirut. Since 1975, the Munib Shahid Memorial Fund has allowed tens of doctors of all nationalities and social classes to do that, and today, many of the most prominent doctors at the AUH are beneficiaries of this Fund. Whenever Sereen happened to be at the Hospital, people would express their appreciation for what she had done, together with Munib's family, friends, and colleagues, in the name of her husband. The Fund is still operational since it only uses the interest of the money invested rather than the capitol.

For her part, Sereen spent a great deal of her time in the projects set up for the development of palestinian camps in Lebanon. Palasteinia embroidery, in particular, used for generations by village women, was developed into a fine art and was encouraged to grow as a source of income for many women. Munib and Seeren's three daughters, Maya, Laila, and Zeina, all helped, continuing the strong streak of selfless aid for those in need that permeated Rouha Khanum's family.

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Parvine Afnan Shahid

Having grown up with the legacy of the Faith of Abdul Baha' s family, especially his grandchildren who knew him well, – some having had the opportunity of working and serving the Cause during his time, as well as during the early years of Shoghi Effendi's ministry – I feel blessed to have had the privilege of being part of a sincere and devoted Baha'i family. Despite being labeled as Covenant Breaker from birth, the essence and the principles of the faith I grew up with remain part of my life.

My father, Hassan Jalal Shahid, youngest son of Rouha Khanum, was the last surviving grandchild of Abdul Baha, (he passed away in June of 2015) and as such had a unique knowledge of and insight into the history of our family.

Over the many years he had often told us many stories typically told by a family elder of the various family members and long standing Bahai's he had personally known.

During Abdu'l Baha's last days, Rouha Khanum remained by her father's side. With her in the Master's room was her youngest son, my father.

He remained close to his mother and her three sisters Zia Khanum, Touba Khanum, and Munavar Khanum until the end of their lives.

The passing of Abdul Baha in 1921 marked a new phase both in the development of the Baha'i Faith and in the lives of Abdul Baha's daughters and their families.

Members of Abdul Baha's household have at all times respected both Abdul Baha's and Shoghi Effend'is positions within the Faith and served the Cause in any capacity they could and as long as they were allowed to do so.

Over the years, some dramatic changes occurred, causing deep rifts both within Shoghi Effendi's own family and with some loyal and long- standing Baha'is of the time. Cables sent by the Guardian to the Baha'i world sealed their fate within the community. This justice or injustice was never addressed.

In the face of the silence maintained by the members of the family, and since the passing of the Guardian, the reasons for the "excommunication" and labelling of family members as "Covenant Breakers", has been greatly exaggerated and built upon particularly in the books and articles of Ruhiyyih Khanom, Adib Taherzadeh, Moojan Momen and the Universal House of Justice .

Decades after the passing away of the Guardian the Universal House of Justice in 1996 , publicly passed its judgment about me and without any attempt at discussion or asking of questions ; it was assumed I would wish to bring disruption to the Unity of the Bahai Faith and in the process perpetuating misconceptions .

This website is intended to truthfully answer the inquiries that have been made over the years by Baha'is in an attempt to understand the events that occurred within Abdul Baha's and Shoghi Effedi's family members.

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Riaz Rabbani

The youngest son of Zia Khanum and Mirza Hadi Shirazi, my uncle Riaz was the artist of the family. Like his older brothers, Shoghi Effendi and Hussein Effendi, he had gone to the Jesuit school in Haifa and then to the American University in Beirut, Lebanon. Unlike Shoghi Effendi, he and his older brother Hossein, after getting their B.A. degrees from the AUB, did not go to Europe for further education, but remained at the Master's house, the Andaroon, at 7 Persian Street, now the home of Shoghi Effendi and his wife Rouhiyyih Khanum. By the early 1940s, when his mother had left the Andaroun, unable to stand the treatment Rouhiyyih Khanum was meting out to her, (see Ruhi Afnan's letter (1970) to the Spiritual Assembly of Tehran) he was under orders not to see his mother. This he had found particularly hard to take. He had always been greatly attached to his parents and he now found himself alone, his parents away at the small home and garden his father had on the slopes of Mt. Carmel, (called Karm) not far from where the House of Justice now stands, suffering in the shadow of Shoghi Effendi's anger. His sisters were married and away, having incurred the wrath of Shoghi Effendi due to their marriages. His only recourse was to meet his mother secretly. Someone, either one of Shoghi Effendi's informers or someone who hoped to curry favour by bringing him 'news', saw them in in a public garden at the end of Nordau Street in Haifa and informed Shoghi Effendi. The result: he too ended up in Karm, but at least in the company of his parents.

My uncle Riaz was an artist and an amateur calligrapher, and above all, a treasure trove of information, stories and anecdotes about the family, the community and its various members throughout its history, as well as the writings of its founders. He was very well versed in Persian literature, Islamic history, and Islamic and Persian manuscripts of which he had a collection – whenever finances permitted. After his death, my sister, Maliheh Afnan, who was his heir, donated the best of these to the British Library, in his name.

Highly intelligent, with a wicked sense of humour, he was an excellent raconteur who could leave one in stitches with laughter, my uncle Riaz was a treasure trove who would have been of invaluable service to the Baha'i archives. Instead, he spent much of his life roaming Europe and other parts of the world on a shoestring, haunting antiquarian bookshops in Damascus, Aleppo, Beirut, North Africa and Europe. If there ever was a waste of talent, that was a glaring example. And it was not difficult to point the finger at the cause of it all.

Shoghi Effendi had grave problems, not least of which was an over-powering wife who saw to it that no member of the family, male or female, remained around to serve, help or be of any assistance to him and the Cause. She seems to have found his Achilles' heel, an ego that needed constant pumping. Obedience was the yardstick by which loyalty to him, service to the Faith and faithfulness to the Covenant of Baha'u'llah was judged, and if found 'missing', was most severely punished.

Any faithful Baha'i knows what it means to be cast out of the Faith and ostracised. How much more so for people who were members of a family in whose veins flowed the blood of the Bab, of Baha'u'llah and the Master; who were born, brought up and nurtured by the broad, enlightened and luminous message which believed in the potential for developing that of the divine that exists in all God's creatures, with emphasis on the value, nobility, dignity and equal rights to freedom and free choice of human beings. Being dumbed down and beaten into unthinking submission only, produced human robots, fitting members of a closed community. Was that what the Bab had given his life for? Was that what Baha'u'llah's purpose had been? Was that the reason for Abdul Baha's wide and repeated travels to Europe and America at the start of the 20th century? My uncle Riaz, interested as he was in the history of the Cause, contacted members of Abdul Baha's half-brothers designated as Covenant Breakers by Abdul Baha himself, for going against the wishes of Baha'u'llah, as laid out in his will. That implied that they were to be shunned by the members of the Baha'i community. My uncle contacted them not out of love or allegiance to that part of the family, but out of interest in the original documents that they had, and their version of the stories they had to tell about the disputes among the half-brothers who were the sons of Baha'u'llah. Shoghi Effendi nevertheless adamantly condemned his brother, Riaz, for…

'… Personal contact recently established (by) my own treacherous, despicable brother Riaz with Majdi'd-Din redoutable enemy (of the)

Faith, former henchman (of) Muhammad-‘Ali, Arch-breaker (of) Baha’u’llah’s Covenant. Convey information (to) all National Assemblies.’

My uncle Riaz died before the publication of Adib Taherzadeh’s book The Covenant of Baha’u’llah was published and we got a chance to read the cables that Shoghi Effendi had written about the family. He took pride in the thought that there was no cable about him. Little did he know.

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Rouha Khanum

She was Touba Khanum's twin, but rather different in character. An extrovert, given to continuous good deeds for any member of the community in need of medical attention, she was also instrumental in setting up a society for children in need in Haifa.

As a young person, she had been sociable and full of energy and dedicated to her work as a prominent member of the family that headed the Baha'i community. She received the pilgrims who came to Haifa from the US, Europe, and other parts of the world to visit her charismatic and prominent father and the shrines in Haifa and Bhaji, with the same enthusiasm as she attended to any member of the community in need of any medical or other care. In fact, she found time for everybody except her own family. After her husband died, she blamed herself for not finding enough time for him, and her daughter Zahra said of her that she had mothered everybody except her own children.

As a young girl, Rouha Khanum had developed a special bond with her cousin Shoa'ullah, the son of her paternal uncle Mirza Muhammad Ali (commonly called Miz Mamdali). He was 19 years old and she was younger. However, the rift between her father, Abdul Baha, and his half-brother, Miz Mamdali, brought matters to a difficult point. With a breakup of family unity imminent, she often told the story to her children of how she had gone to her uncle and, falling on his knees, had begged him not to allow matters to reach such a point. But it was not to be. Miz Mamdali sent Shoa' to the USA, where he stayed for many years. When he came back to Haifa, many years later, Rouha Khanum wished to see him. Hassan, her son, tried to arrange a meeting. Shoa' turned it down on the basis that it would bring back too many painful memories.

Rouha Khanum was destined to marry Mirza Jalal Isfahani Shahid, the son of Muhammad Hassan who, along with his two brothers, had been arrested in Isfahan and ordered to curse the Bab and Baha'u'allah. The two older ones refused to do so, but convinced their younger brother, Mirza Ismail, not to follow their example so that someone from the family would be spared to look after the women and children that would be widowed or orphaned. After their martyrdom, Baha'u'llah designated them as Sultan al Shuhada (the Sultan of Martyrs) and Mahboub al Shuhada (the Beloved of Martyrs). He also sent for the two widows and their children to come to Acre, which they did. Mirza Jalal Shahid, the son of Sultan al Shuhada, grew up there and later went into business where, in spite of ups and downs, he prospered.

They had four children: Maryam, Munib, Zahra, and Hassan. They had grown up at Nº 9 Persian Street, a house adjacent to that of Abdu'l Baha at Nº 7. They were very much aware of their place in the tension-laden family disputes and disagreements that prevailed.

The relationship of Abdu'l Baha with his daughters, sons-in-law, and his grandchildren was good and positive. When it came to the latter, it was clear-cut and ambitious. He had decided that Shoghi Effendi (the son of his eldest daughter) would succeed him, but that Maryam (the eldest daughter of Ruha Khanum) would be a fitting wife for him. Munib (the eldest son of Ruha Khanum) had, from his teenage years, made it clear to his grandfather that he wanted to become a doctor. To this, the Master had replied that he would not only be a doctor of their physical health but of their spiritual health as well.

Matters, however, did not move to plan. Shoghi Effendi had met Mary Maxwell on one of the trips her parents had made to Haifa, and according to his brother, Hossein, had fallen in love with her. The fact that Maryam developed Hodgkin's Disease while a student at the Sorbonne in Paris only made things easier for him. Waiting until she was diagnosed as incurable, he went ahead and married the woman he loved. He renamed her Ruhiyeh Khanum (it's Farsi pronunciation) though Bahahis always write it as Rouhiyyih Khanum (it's Arabic spelling and pronunciation).

That was the first blow for Rouha Khanum. It was soon followed by her son Munib's decision to marry Serene Husseini, a member of a prominent Muslin family from Jerusalem. Of course, Shoghi Effendi did not approve, so his aunt, Rouha Khanum, and her whole family were cast out.

"Moneeb Shaheed, grandson of both 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the King of Martyrs, married according to the Moslem rites the daughter of a political exile who is nephew of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. This treacherous act of alliance with enemies of the Faith merits condemnation of entire Bahá'í world."

Shoghi Rabbani
(Bahá'í News, No. 172, Dec 1944)

Is it a surprise that she got a nervous breakdown (also known as a mental breakdown) that turned her into an invalid for life?

As if that were not enough, the Spiritual Assembly of Beirut, Lebanon was disbanded by Shoghi Effendi after it officiated at the marriage of her daughter, Zahra, to her cousin, Ruhi (son of Tuba Khanum). To top it all, he sent a message to his aunt, Rouha Khanum, that if her younger son, Hassan, married me, Shoghi Effendi's niece, he would not allow any Baha'is to walk in her funeral. And what Baha'i would have walked in the funeral of an excommunicated Baha'i, even though she were the granddaughter of Baha'u'llah, the daughter of Abdul Baha, the wife of the son of the King of Martyrs of the Baha'i faith, and Shoghi Effendi's own aunt?

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Rouhanguise Rabbani Afnan

By Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid

Rouhanguise Khanum. My mother – second of Zia Khanum and Mirza Hadi Shirazi's children – was born with the new 20th century (though her passport said 1904). She, together with her cousin Maryam, daughter of Rouha Khanum and Mirza Jalal Shahid, were what in Farsi they called 'goleh sareh sabat', or the flowers at the head of the basket. They were the two beauties among the five granddaughters of Abdul Baha. While in her teens, the Master had sought to give her in marriage, in the traditional manner, to a prominent Baha'i preacher quite a number of years her senior. She did not see eye to eye with her grandfather and luckily escaped a fate she dreaded when the gentleman in question had an epileptic seizure right before the Master's eyes.

Having finished her high school studies at the Dames de Nazareth in Haifa, she went to England to continue her education. That however, was cut short both for her and for her brother Shoghi Effendi, when they both had to return to Haifa upon the passing away of their grandfather, Abdul Baha.

She was destined to marry Nayer Afnan, son of Seyyed Ali Afnan, and grandson of Afnaneh Kabir, the brother in law of the Bab. His mother was Forough Khanum, the daughter of Baha'u'llah from his third marriage to Gowhar Khanum. It was a love match not exactly blessed by Shoghi Effendi but neither did he put his foot down with a resounding No. The rest of the family, however, were on her side, and in 1928, upon one of his annual summer sojourns in Europe, the marriage took place in the [late] Master's home, where his sister, Bahiyeh Khanum officiated at the wedding in the presence of Mounireh Khanum, the Master's widow and other members of the family and of the community.

My father had studied agriculture at Reading University in England and upon graduation had worked at the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture dealing with the development and planting of cotton in that country.

My father's older brother, Hussein Afnan, had, upon the recommendation of the Master to King Faisal (when the latter came to visit him in Haifa after the French had ousted him from Syria and the British set him up as King of Iraq), gone to work there and achieved prominence in various government and diplomatic posts. As such, Shoghi Effendi had asked him to try to convince the Iraqi authorities to release the house that Baha'u'llah had occupied in Baghdad, to the Baha'i community. This the authorities refused to do and the government remained adamant in its non-cooperation. At this point Shoghi Effendi asked Hussein Afnan to resign his post, in protest against the government's negative attitude. This, Hussein Afnan refused to do, and was consequently 'expelled' by Shoghi Effendi. At the same time, my father was told to sever all relations with his brother. My father did not see the point in that and did not comply. All this placed my mother in a very difficult position and I well remember the tension in our household. Matters came to a head when Shoghi Effendi ordered my mother – though unwell – to go to Beirut to try to stop their sister Mehranguise from going to Baghdad to marry my uncle Hassan Afnan (my father's youngest brother). When she failed in her mission, my parents were summarily 'expelled'. Easily said, easily done. Both judgement and punishment were meted out and executed. Who was to say why and what for? Blind obedience was the name of the game. 'Expulsion' the punishment if you failed in your mission.

My mother was devastated. A beautiful, dignified, intelligent and well-read lady – truly a lady in every sense of the word – she withstood the blow and said nothing. She suffered in silence and avoided all recrimination. Her brother, Shoghi Effendi, had been appointed Guardian of the Faith that my father's grandfather and her great grandfather, had, together with the Bab, established. Abdul Baha,

Baha'u'llah's son, had, in his will, appointed him as the Guardian and had described him in glowing colours. Her brother's judgements and decisions, right or wrong, she did not dispute. She simply swallowed the bitter pill and maintained her silence. As time passed, all the family of Shoghi Effendi came to share that fate, but they all remained silent, refusing to do anything that would cast a shadow on the Cause of the Bab and Baha'u'llah. The group included his parents, his brothers and sisters, together with their respective families, his aunts, their spouses and children (his cousins). They were shunned by the community, and if anybody disobeyed, they were liable to share the same fate. In the same category were Baha'is who had disobeyed him when he ordered them to leave life and livelihood in Haifa and to go to various other assigned countries, towns and cities. Easily said, but how easily done, I wonder.

In our apartment at No. 6 Prophet Street, in Haifa, we led a quiet life, shunned by the community (with one exception that I recall) and out of the limelight and the activities of the Baha'i community. I well remember my parents' bedroom in which hung a very good reproduction of Raphael's Madonna of the Seggiola (Madonna of the Chair). The serenity on the Madonna's face was not something that I could associate with my mother's face, though she was as beautiful, as dignified and as feminine. With her brother she shared a streak of hot temper, but was very proud of him and loved him dearly till the end of her life. Together with her sister Mehranguise, they suffered at his hands, but there nevertheless was a very strong bond of affection, loyalty and desire to defend him, which bordered on reverence, in spite of the pain he had inflicted on them. I wish I knew exactly why.

During the 2nd World War and at the time of King Abdulla, my father worked in Jordan as the Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture. Not to interrupt our studies, my mother, my sister and I remained in Haifa, joining my father during school holidays.

By 1948 the hostilities between the Arabs and Jews had started in Palestine, and after a few frightening and disturbing incidents my parents saw fit, temporarily to leave for the peace and quiet of Lebanon. About a year later my father returned, – thanks to the good offices of the Iranian government on behalf of the Iranians who had lived in Palestine, – to what was now Israel, never to leave again, as he died there in 1952. My mother lived to be 92 – still in exile – this time in London, where she died in 1992 and where, according to her wishes, is buried in Southgate Cemetery, not far from the last resting place of Shoghi Effendi, a brother who wrongly accused her of many things (see my letter to Taherzadeh dated December 1994) but whom she loved dearly till the end of her life. There she is flanked by her brother Riaz and by our faithful nanny Jamileh who had ever been a blessing in our lives, and who had, since the age of thirteen, accompanied my mother and served her, keeping her company through thick and thin, until she too died, in London, two years after my mother.

My sister Maliheh, five years my junior, became an artist of international renown, and died in London on the 6th of January 2016, at the age of eighty.

My sister and I were the only two children of Rouhanguise and Nayer Afnan.

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Ruhi Effendi Afnan

Ruhi Mohsen Afnan (end of December 1899 – 1971). He often told the story of how he was born on the last day of the last month of the last year of the century.

The Master's grandchildren were all well educated and went to the best schools in Palestine and abroad. Ruhi Afnan, like Shoghi Effendi, who was two years his senior, went to the College des Freres in Haifa, then to the preparatory section (prep) of the American University of Beirut (AUB) and then on to the University itself. He then went on to University College London to study International Law. As a young man, again like Shoghi Effendi, Ruhi served the Master as interpreter and secretary. After the passing away of the Master in 1921, and when Shoghi Effendi had a breakdown upon finding out that he had been left the huge responsibility of becoming the Guardian, it was Ruhi Afnan who accompanied him on his long sojourn in Europe. (See Ruhi Afnan's 1970 letter to the Spiritual Assembly of Iran). When Shoghi Effendi finally returned to Haifa, Ruhi for many years served as his secretary, assistant and helper in more ways than one. They had always been good friends, had grown up in the same family and household and shared their dedication to the Cause.

Ruhi undertook two very successful visits to the US to preach the Cause. After the second trip Shoghi Effendi had suggested that while he was away on his usual summer sojourn in Europe, Ruhi could go and preach wherever he chose (see Ruhi's 1970 letter referred to above). But before that could happen, the situation changed. Shoghi Effendi decided to 'expel' him from the Cause. Having done that he expected Ruhi's mother to 'shun' him. When she did not do that she too was 'shunned'. However, no cables had been officially sent by Shoghi Effendi, formally 'expelling' him. In fact when Ruhi and his cousin, Zahra Shahid decided to get married they had a Baha'i ceremony at the Spiritual Assembly of Beirut. However, the said Assembly was soon disbanded by the Guardian. The formal 'expulsion' happened when his sister, Soraya, married the third son of Forough Khanum (the daughter of Bahaullah) and Sayid Ali Afnan, when a cable was sent expelling Touba Khanum (a daughter of the Master) and her three sons, Ruhi, Soheil and Fuad (the latter posthumously, as he had already died in the London blitz some time before) and her daughter Soraya. The reasons given, among others, were that Touba Khanum and her family had concurred in the marriage of Soraya to Dr Faizy Afnan; that Ruhi had gone on his second trip to the US without his permission; and that Fuad had gone to London to study without Shoghi Effendi's knowledge and consent.

Another matter that disturbed Shoghi Effendi greatly was the book regarding Ruhi Afnan that Ahmad Sohrab wrote, called *Abdul Baha's Grandson: Story of a 20th Century Excommunication*. This book has been written without Ruhi's knowledge and consent – something the Guardian was not willing to believe, and when Ahmad Sohrab sent a copy to Ruhi it was sent back with a strong letter of protest.

Unable to preach the Cause, Ruhi Afnan took to writing books, another way of serving a Cause that meant so much to him. These he published, at his own expense, at the Philosophical Library of New York and included the following titles:

- *The Great Prophets*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1960.
- *Zoroaster's Influence on Greek Thought*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1965.
- *Zoroaster's Influence on Anaxagoras, the Greek Tragedians and Socrates*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1969.
- *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah and The Bab, Book One: Descartes' Theory of Knowledge*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1970.
- *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah and The Bab, Book Two: Spinoza Concerning God*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1977. (This book was published by his wife after his death.)

Baha'is are told not to read these books, because Ruhi is considered a 'covenant breaker'.

(Incidentally, if anyone wishes to see the reasons given by the Guardian for the 'expulsions' of all the members of the family, then other than the Baha'i sites on the internet, the book of Adib Taherzadeh, *The Covenant of Baha'u'llah* published by George Ronald 1992 has a chapter entitled 'The Faithless Relatives of Shoghi Effendi'.)

Ruhi Afnan always was and remained, until the end of his life and in every sense of the word, a dedicated, devoted and sincere Baha'i. He was deeply disappointed and greatly depressed by the way things had gone. The prayer of Baha'ullah that he quotes at the end of his 1970 letter to the Baha'i Spiritual Assembly goes to show where he rested his hopes and aspirations, uprooted member of the Baha'i community that he had been forced to become.

Ruhi Afnan and Zahra Shahid had two sons, Iraj and Parviz.

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Shoghi Effendi Rabbani

By Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid

Shoghi Effendi (March 1, 1897 – November 4, 1957) was the eldest grandson of 'Abdu'l-Baha. The family name of **Rabbani** (godly) had been given to Shoghi Effendi by Abdul Baha, and was consequently also used by his siblings.

Much has been written about Shoghi Effendi – from a variety of perspectives and for a variety of reasons – to which there is little to add here. What remains to be said, which has never been said before, and which is very painful to recount, is to try, in a short and succinct way, to present the angle that reflects the pain and the suffering that the members of the family bore with the brunt of the Guardian's anger, displeasure, disapproval, judgement and punishment due to a long list of supposed wrongdoings such as 'disobedience', 'treachery', 'plotting', 'rebelliousness', 'disloyalty', 'covenant breaking' etc, etc, etc, (if you want the whole 'dis-honour roll' then check the cables Shoghi Effendi sent with regard to the various members of the family in Adib Taherzadeh's book *The Covenant of Baha'u'llah*), with which he accused them – rightly or wrongly, who is to say, since he was the sole prosecutor, sole judge and one man jury, and there was no recourse to anything or anyone else for anything as simple as a chance for an open hearing or even handed defence. Maybe the depth of the pain and the hurt – and the great sense of relief – can be realized when, decades later we heard it said by a Baha'i of impeccable standing – who, for obvious reasons shall remain nameless – quoting no less a source than Hassan Balyuzi, to the effect that the family of Shoghi Effendi had never done anything to harm the Cause. One voice, now silenced by time, but nevertheless remembered, one opinion that privately, of course, seemed to say something different… What relief, what pleasure and pain. One man, one voice in the wilderness of the 'outcasts,' maybe saying 'Why?'

The four daughters of the Master ['Abdu'l-Baha], Zia Khanum, Touba Khanum, Rouha Khanum, and Monawar Khanum so loved and respected their father you would say he was their Lord, not only their father. It was inconceivable that any of them would do anything that ran contrary to their father's wishes. This not only applied to the position of Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Cause, duly appointed by their father, but to any action, deed or word that would adversely affect the Cause of Baha'u'llah and the life work of the Master.

They had lived their lives as highly respected honourable ladies of a highly respected, honourable family. All four ended their lives 'expelled' from the faith of their forebears and 'shunned' by the community of their father and grandfather. Why? Because they 'disobeyed'. Three of them suffered nervous breakdowns. Why? According to the Italian family physician, Dr. Costero, of the Italian hospital in Haifa – who knew them and their circumstances very well – because of the upheavals in their lives, which left them bereft of the support and the warmth of the community they belonged to, old, alienated, lonely and friendless in a world where they no longer had peace or place.

Things had not always been like that. When Shoghi Effendi first took over the reins of the Guardianship he truly was a benevolent source of help and succour to the family; maybe – and here I say maybe because this is pure speculation on my part – to a certain extent, he was returning the help and succour that the family had provided during his very traumatic period of adjustment to the new role and responsibilities that had been unexpectedly thrust upon him at the very young age of twenty three. He was kind, friendly and supportive. But soon things changed. Could it be that he took the will of the Master too literally to heart and thus required total obedience from both family and community? A strong suspicious mind was a character trait (particularly marked in his younger brother Riaz) which also soon manifested itself in him as well, leading to a willingness to listen and believe 'reports' brought in by people who thought that they would curry favour with him. Eventually he used informers to keep an eye on people.

Shoghi Effendi required obedience to his wishes. This became very obvious when it came to the matter of marriages – those of his sisters or cousins – and travels abroad for purposes of preaching the Faith, particularly in the case of Ruhi Afnan, or of study abroad, as in the case of Fuad Afnan. The strange thing was that both with Ruhi and Fuad Afnan, he mentioned their going to the US and England as causes of his displeasure only after the fact. Ruhi Afnan had gone and come back from two very successful tours of the US where he had visited and spoken at many Baha'i gatherings and occasions with the full knowledge and approval of Shoghi Effendi. He knew full well that Fuad had gone to London to study at the Imperial College. He knew that while there, and until his death in an air raid during the London blitz, he was very involved with the Baha'i community. The news of his death was transmitted to Shoghi Effendi by the Baha'is in London. It was not until much later, when the cables were sent regarding the 'expelling' of both brothers that Shoghi Effendi, among other things, said that they had both gone abroad without his permission.

Since the family knew that he suffered from a disposition to being hot tempered, they had to be very careful to behave in a manner both befitting his position as Guardian, as well as to avoid provoking his ire that could easily boil over.(1) To put it simply, the atmosphere in the family was not one of ease and general wellbeing as they all strove to work in the service of the Cause and its Guardian, but rather one of tension and pressure to be and behave in a manner pleasing to Shoghi Effendi. Having opinions that differed from his, expressing any ideas that deviated from what he considered right or correct, interpreting anything in ways that he disapproved of, these all put everyone, maybe even he himself, under pressure and tension – pressure and tension from which there was no escape for the family, and which, maybe, he dealt with by finding reasons to 'expel' those who bothered his somewhat exaggerated need for obedience and acquiescence to his guidance. Again I say 'maybe' because, though he was my uncle, and I was his niece, I had not seen him since I was a child of seven or eight, I was not on the scene, as my parents (and of course I as one of their two daughters) had been 'expelled' and all I have to go on are the stories that I have very often heard from members of the family. However, when it came to opposition to marriages, it becomes very personal and first hand. When Shoghi Effendi heard that his cousin, Hassan Shahid was planning to marry me, his niece, he sent a message to Hassan's mother Rouha Khanum, his aunt, with Dr. Lutfulla Hakim, a prominent Bahai, and member of the Hands of the Cause. Upon his arrival at her home at No. 9 Persian Street (adjoining Shoghi Effendi's residence at No. 7) he told Hassan that he had a message from Shoghi Effendi and that he wished to see her alone. Worried that the news would prove too big a shock for her frail nervous condition, Hassan asked Dr. Lotfolla to take her condition into consideration, when giving her the message, because she was already shaking with anxiety as to what this visit and this message meant. It soon became clear. Shoghi Effendi's message was that if her son Hassan married me, he would not allow any Baha'is to walk in her funeral when she died! This, over a decade after Shoghi Effendi had 'expelled' her and all her family, which made it impossible for any Baha'is to walk in her funeral anyway! I wonder what reasoning in Shoghi Effendi's mind made it necessary for him to oppose this marriage. Whatever real reasons he had, neither I, nor Hassan, or our respective families, have learnt. For all of us, it simply cast a shadow that we could have done without, reminding us that even when cast out of the Cause, the Guardian expected obedience to dictates from afar, issued by someone who neither accepted us as members of the community nor granted us any recognition of basic human rights. Even as outcasts we had to go on being 'guided', ordered and punished for 'sins' known only to him. For us only the uprooting, the severance, the shunning and the pain. I wish I knew what it meant to him.

Looking back, decades later, I can only speculate. Now in my mid eighties, married to a man who is the last surviving grandson of the Master [*note: this article was written before Hassan Shahid passed away*], we often wonder. Could Shoghi Effendi have been looking back on the experiences of Baha'u'llah with his half brother Subhi Azal, and the Master with his half brothers, and thought that the pattern of conflicts, claims and counter claims were inevitable and therefore should be nipped in the bud before they could develop? If that were the case how could he have overlooked the fact that in the first two generations it was the brothers who created the problems, for whatever reasons, and who gave reason to Baha'u'llah and the Master to start the painful story of covenant breaking. The family of Shoghi Effendi raised no flags of dissent, did not accuse him of anything, sought to serve the Cause in whatever capacity they could and imprinted it on the minds of three ensuing generations that nothing should be done by the family that would in any way harm the Cause. In fact this became such a mantra, such a symbol of faith and faithfulness to the Cause of Baha'u'llah that all concepts of fairness, justice and simple human dignity were thrown to the winds and the family, over thirty in number, accepted the humiliation and the pain as a sacrifice to the Faith. In spite of accusations directed at his sisters, Rouhanguise and Mehranguise and his cousin Soraya of being faithless and disobedient to Shoghi Effendi in marrying the sons of Seyed Ali Afnan and Forough Khanum (the daughter of Baha'u'llah); of accusations against all the excommunicated members of the family of turning to Islam; of marrying a Moslem, as in the case of Munib Shahid; or a 'low born Christian woman', as in the case of his brother Hussein (see Taherzadeh's book mentioned above), no one, but no one, responded, defended themselves or in any way sought to put matters right.

They swallowed their pride, disregarded their dignity, suffered humiliation, ‘expulsion’, and the strange absurdity of some Baha’is claiming that ‘no family existed’ – in spite, for example, of the loads of information about the family in Ruhiyyih Khanum’s book *The Priceless Pearl* and Adib Taherzadeh’s book *The Covenant of Baha’u’llah.* This in addition to the answer given by the latter to a question by Pauline Smith(2) of Masterton, New Zealand when she met him in Manchester in 1994 and asked him about the possibility of the return of a member of the family to the fold, which was to the effect that the decision had not yet been made as to what to do about the family of Shoghi Effendi (from a letter written by Pauline Smith to the House of Justice on the 10th of September 1996). I personally once received an email reverently asking me whether I was a member of the ‘holy family’. Needless to say, that query went unanswered, but…

Life is strange, and over the decades, the myth of the ‘faithless relatives of Shoghi Effendi’ was perpetuated, written about in Baha’i books and articles, and accepted as truth derived from an ‘infallible’ source. According to the official Baha’i line the family as such was driven into oblivion and extinction, and the myth culminated in the putting forth of the legend that Ruhiyyih Khanum was the only surviving member of Baha’u’llah’s family. (See the invitation extended on November 11, 1993, in honour of Madam Ruhiyyih Rabbani, ‘the last surviving member of the family of Baha’u’llah, the founder of the Baha’i faith’ by the senior partner of a firm of solicitors in London, published in *The Independent* newspaper of London dated November 9, 1993.)

Truth, they say, can be stranger than fiction, but in this sad and sorry saga, where is the truth and what is fiction?

Of course ‘expulsion’ was not limited to the family. In fact, the very first members of the community that Shoghi Effendi saw fit to grace with that title was Abbas Gholi and his wife. This gentleman, good looking and well dressed, was a man of some means who had purchased land on the slopes of Mount Carmel and which he had donated to the Cause. He and his wife, who were childless, had chosen certain roles for themselves in the community. He distilled homemade rose water, and had taken it upon himself to stand at the door of the Shrine of the Bab on the days that meetings were held there, and to sprinkle some on the hands of the visitors who would proceed to refresh their faces with the ‘golab’ before entering the Shrine. His wife had taken it upon herself to cook and serve a very typically Iranian soup called Asheh Reshteh (thick with beans and noodles and beautifully spiced) which she served to all comers on the five days (Ayyamiha) preceding the 19 days of fasting in March. Why these people were expelled I do not know, but they were the first to be thus ‘graced/disgraced’. I have heard it said that maybe if some members of the family or prominent Baha’is had raised the point or discussed it with Shoghi Effendi, then maybe it would not have become a habit to which he reverted so often. But then the reverence and deference in which he was held, or maybe, simply, the fear of offending the Guardian and suffering the same fate themselves, seems to have stopped anyone from making such a move.

Short or secondary as the story of the family of Shoghi Effendi might be, there is a debt owed to Baha’u’llah and Abdul Baha. It goes without saying that they both suffered a great deal as a result of the conflicts with their respective brothers. In relation to the third generation, I feel it a shame that their illustrious names should in any way be associated with a record that leaves so much to be desired by way of accuracy. At least let us give it the dignity of a simple, straightforward hearing, at which a side that has so far gone unheard, unseen and unknown gets a chance to put forth its story, in the light of Shoghi Effendi’s cables, sent to various Spiritual Assemblies and made public on the internet by official Baha’i sources.

My husband, Hassan Shahid, very seriously asked Dr. Moojan Momen to arrange for him to meet some members of the House of Justice, where he would be able to present the case of the family ‘expellees’, just as a matter of historical record. Dr. Momen closed the door on that one, saying that that was not possible.

Addendum: Hassan Shahid, the last of the thirteen grandchildren of the Master, Abdul Baha, died on the 23rd of June 2015. Having gone to meet his maker, as we are all destined to do, maybe now he will be able make the case so dear to his heart and plead the causes of justice and fairness which he so firmly believed in.

Notes:

(1) One example that comes to mind is the incident that occurred at the train station of Lausanne with his cousin Qudsi Onsi, who was travelling with him. That day they were setting out for a long hike in the mountains. Shoghi Effendi made it a rule for himself and his travelling companions to eat only once a day, at dinner time. Qudsi had been hungry that day and had secretly hidden a sandwich in his pocket or rucksack. When Shoghi Effendi noticed he went for Qudsi with his walking stick, attracting the attention of the police. Qudsi quickly assured them that it was just a game and no harm was intended. That saved the situation, but it is a good example of hot temper boiling over.

(2) Pauline Smith was a student of my daughter Parvine Shahid at the Montessori Training College in London. She told my daughter that she had converted to the Baha'i Faith. In the circumstances Parvine thought it was only fair to tell Pauline who she was and that as a Baha'i she was not supposed to befriend her. The story however, does not end there. Pauline had been suffering from liver cancer while in England. She therefore decided to go back home to New Zealand where she eventually recovered. From there she had contacted the House of Justice in Haifa, regarding the possibility of having Parvine's request to return to the Cause accepted. The answers had been negative and they came with the order that she was to sever all relations with Parvine who had gone to Masterton to work at a Montessori school that was being planned there. Pauline achieved some notoriety as a result of her difficulty in considering Parvine a covenant breaker and therefore an undesirable who should be 'shunned', as the House of Justice required. Finding this hard to obey, she was eventually 'expelled'.

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Soheil Afnan

Soheil Mohsen Afnan, the third child of Mirza Muhsin and Touba Khanum, was, like his older brother Ruhi, an intellectual, who given the chance, would have been of great service to the Cause. Intelligent, academically gifted and ambitious, witty and straight backed, his green eyes stood out in his dark face and he was good at putting on a very clipped British accent and Effendi demeanour.

Educated at the College des Frères in Haifa and then at the American University 'prep' and the University proper in Beirut, he went on to the Sorbonne and Oxford. Financial constraints following the death of his father cut his education short and left him dejected and disappointed. However, when it came to his younger brother Fuad – about ten years his junior – he was determined that nothing should stand in the way of his education and prospects for the future. In 1938, when foreign students were being advised to leave England and go home, Fuad arrived in London to study engineering at the Imperial College. His death, during the London blitz, shattered Soheil. The shock caused him to disappear for almost a week, giving the grieving family cause to think that he had committed suicide. Fortunately that was not the case, and he came back – a changed man. Having failed to continue his own education, seeing his brother's life cut short and his ambitions for him come to nothing, he now threw himself into research and study. Classical Greek was high on his list of priorities. His teacher was a Greek priest who was an accomplished tutor.

Soheil had perfected his Farsi 'at his mother's knee', so to speak, though all the Master's grandchildren, excepting for the three youngest boys (Hassan, Riaz and Fuad) had studied Farsi at home with Agha Mirza Abdullah Bahhage, a writer and poet in his own right. The Persian Bayan, not an easy book to read, was on the curriculum. His Greek studies however, resulted in a translation of Aristotle's Poetics directly from the Greek to Farsi – something that had not been done before, and was published in Beirut in 1947. Upon seeing it, the well known Iranian poet Mehdi Akhawaneh Thaleth gave him full credit and kudos in a poem dedicated to Suheil Afnan with an Arabic title called 'Fil Istijazah wal E'tithar', (loosely translated as 'I have taken the liberty and beg forgiveness'). At the time Akhawaneh Thaleth was the literary editor of the newspaper 'Iraneh Ma' (Our Iran). Unable to reach Soheil or to locate him, he took the liberty – he says – to serialize the whole thing in the newspaper and ended it with the above mentioned poem. In it he praises Soheil Afnan for breaking new ground and producing the first translation directly from the Greek, whereas previous translations had gone via other languages (see 'Arghanoon', a collection of poetry by Mehdi Akhawaneh Thaleth).

From there on, Soheil managed to go to Cambridge where he got his doctorate and went on to teach Iranian linguistics at the time when Professor Arberry was there. Later he was invited to teach at Harvard, but that did not work out.

The books he wrote included the following titles:

- *The Poetics of Aristotle*. Translated from Greek to Persian. Luzac & Co., London, 1948
- *The Persai*. Translated from Greek into Persian. Adrien Maisonneuve, Paris, 1952
- *Lexique des Termes de Logique en Grec, Anglais, Francais, Persan et Arab*. Mimiographiee, Paris, 1954
- *Avicenna, His Life and Work*. George Allen and Unwin, London, 1958
- *Philosophical Terminology in Arabic and Persian*. E.J. Brill, 1964
- *A Philosophical Lexicon in Persian and Arabic*. Imprimerie Catholique, Beirut, 1968
- *Dar Peyeh Khoshi: Short stories in Persian*. Dar al Mashreq, Beirut, 1971
- *Concerning Dari Persian*. Imprimerie Catholique, Beirut, 1973
- *Payameh Soroush: Two plays in Persian*. Aarash, Stockholm, 1998

Though there does not seem to be any particular cable from Shoghi Effendi regarding Soheil, he was included in the cables that related to Ruhi and the accusation that he had gone to the US without the Guardian’s permission, that the family had acquiesced in the marriage of his sister Soraya to Dr. Feizy Afnan, whom Shoghi Effendi considered a covenant breaker, and that the already dead Fuad had gone to study in London without the Guardian’s knowledge or permission. No separate cable, but nevertheless ‘expelled’ along with all his family, dead and alive.

He spent his last years in Istanbul doing research at the Topkapi and other libraries there.

He set up a scholarship fund in the name of his brother Fuad at the American University of Beirut, for Iranian Baha’i students. But Baha’i students would have nothing to do with it. The University sought and obtained permission to open it to others.

He never married and died in Istanbul in 1990 aged 85.

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Soraya Afnan

Soraya, the second child of Mirza Mohsen Afnan and Touba Khanum, was another of the educated, well read, female grandchildren of the Master. From the American School for Girls in Cairo to Bedford College in London, she lived up to the high intellectual standards of her family. Later, while staying in Bordeaux in France with her mother who was in a sanatorium there after a nervous breakdown, she tried to study nursing. That however was cut short when her mother's health deteriorated and they had to return to Haifa. (See Ruhi Afnan's 1970 article re their mother's health). Her marriage to Dr. Faizy Afnan, the third son of Forough Khanum (the daughter of Baha'u'llah) and Sayid Ali Afnan, took her to Baghdad where she lived for a number of years. The marriage was childless and it eventually broke up and Soraya returned to Haifa.

Though the whole family were 'outcasts' from the community when all this happened, Shoghi Effendi made it an excuse with which he beat not only Touba Khanum and her sons Ruhi and Suheil, but also his sister Rouhanguise, whom he accused, along with her husband Nayer Afnan (the brother of Feizy Afnan) of having 'plotted' not only the marriage of Feizy and Soraya, but also that of Shoghi Effendi's other sister Mehranguise, to the fourth and youngest son of Forough Khanum, Hassan Afnan. (See Taherzadeh's chapter on the "Faithless Relatives of Shoghi Effendi" in his book *The Covenant of Baha'u'llah*).

Why Shoghi Effendi saw these marriages as the results of 'plots' is anyone's guess. Especially as the accusations came much later than the actual events that prompted them. His highly suspicious mind seemed to be seeing 'enemies', 'disobedience,' 'treachery', 'rebelliousness', 'disloyalty', 'pivots of machinations', 'viruses of violation'… everywhere, and he wielded the weapon of 'excommunication' as if it resulted in a burst of blessings upon him and the Faith of which he was the Guardian.

Obedience had become an obsession with him. But obedience to what? Imagined enemies, treacherous plotters, naysayers instead of yes-men… he saw them all around. And he proceeded to place his trust in that which gave him a sense of security, stability, even victory over his imagined enemies. The means? Why, expel them, of course. No one came forward to say 'Why?'. No one to seek a hearing, grant redress or to oppose. Easy and straightforward.

An Iranian who also happened to be a Baha'i of 'good standing', had an explanation that I repeat here, though I have no proof of its validity. 'We Iranians,' he said, 'are very good at setting up gods and worshiping them. Obeying them, accepting all they say as God's own truth, follows naturally.'

On the other hand there is the explanation put forward by none other than the wife of the Guardian, Ruhiyyih Khanum, and quoted by Taherzadeh in the book and chapter quoted above where she says:

> *Whereas we ordinary human beings react in one way way, these extraordinary human beings react in an entirely different way…. I used to wonder, in the early years of my life with the Guardian, why he got so terribly upset by these happenings, why he reacted so violently to them, why he would be prostrated from evidence of Covenant-breaking. Gradually I came to understand that such beings, so different from us, have some sort of mysterious built-in scales in their very souls; automatically they register the spiritual state of others…. We individual Baha'is are like the fish in the sea of the Cause, but these beings are like the sea itself, any alien element in the sea of the Cause, so to speak, with which, because of their nature, they are wholly identified, produces an automatic reaction on their part: the sea casts out its dead.*

Does this make sense? What transgression did Soraya Afnan or any of her family commit to be considered as ‘dead’ and ‘cast out’ from the sea of the Baha’i Faith?

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Stories Known in the Family Regarding Covenant-Breaking

Recounted by Hassan Jalal Shahid to His Daughter Parvine

The will of Bahaullah was very clear. He had appointed Abdul Baha, the Master, Ghosneh A'zam as his successor, to be followed by Ghosneh Akbar, Mirza Mohammad Ali. They were half brothers, from different mothers. Abdul Baha's younger brother from his mother, Ghosneh Athar, had died in an accident in the citadel of Acre where Bahaullah was for a time imprisoned. He had been pacing the terrace of the prison while praying and fell through an opening in the floor. The Master's sister, Bahiyyeh Khanum, the third child from Bahaullah's first wife, was present and often told the story. These days the Bahais recount a very shocking addendum to the story of Ghosneh Athar's accident, saying that as he lay dying, Bahaullah, shocked and upset by the incident, had told him that I could save your life if you so wish, but Ghosneh Athar's answer had been 'facilitate the coming of pilgrims to visit you instead and consider me a sacrifice to your cause'. (The words 'consider me', or 'I am a sacrifice to you', is a translation of the often-repeated Farsi expression of politesse *ghorbaneh shoma*). Bahiyyeh Khanum, who had been present when the incident took place and told the story, never gave it that spin.

Abdul Baha and his family lived in Acre in the house of Abboud, while the rest of the family lived in Bahji. He was in charge of the affairs and work of the community, meeting officials such as Sadek Pasha the governor and other government and religious personalities and officials, receiving pilgrims and attending to their needs. Being his father's right-hand man was something he had done from an early age and it took up a lot of his time. Another strange spin that the Bahais now add to the fact that Abdul Baha lived in Acre while the rest of the family lived in Bahji, is that Bahaullah had maybe deliberately done that to keep Abdul Baha separated from the others because he had an intimation, maybe, of what was to come.

After the passing away of Bahaullah, no one in Abdul Baha's immediate family could explain why the other members of the family joined Mirza Mohammad Ali and turned against the Master. Abdul Baha did his utmost best to prevent a rift occurring amongst the family. My mother, Rouha Khanum, the second of the Master's four surviving children, and who was fourteen when Bahaullah passed away, told us stories of what happened at the time. Amongst others, how she had gone to see her uncle Mirza Mohammad Ali in Bahji and had fallen on his knees, begging him not to allow a split to occur in the family, (especially so in view of the initial split that had occurred between Bahaullah and his half brother Mirza Yahya Azal) but to no avail. In an effort to offset this split the Master considered the betrothal of my mother to the son of Mirza Mohammad Ali, Sho'a'ullah, who was 19 at the time. To prevent this from happening, Mirza Mohammad Ali sent his son to the USA.

Here I want to point out that according to my mother, two persons were primarily the cause of the split that occurred. One was Mirza Mohammad Ali and the other was Mirza Majdedine, his cousin, who was the son of Agha Musayeh Kalim, often referred to as the most faithful brother of Bahaullah, and who also lived at the Mansion in Bahji.

Here I want to narrate an interesting occurrence. In the late 1940s, the Iranian government of the late Shah recognized Israel de facto and sent a representative to the country called Mr. Safiniya. Mr. Nayer Afnan, (grandson of Bahaullah and your grandfather, Parvine) and I went to Jerusalem to meet Mr. Safiniya. An intelligent and well-read man, he had been Iranian Ambassador in several European capitals and now towards the end of his career, had taken the post in Israel for medical reasons. He told us that he was not a religious person, and that if he had wanted to be one he would have been a Zoroastrian, for in his estimation all other religions had built on what Zoroaster had established. However, he was greatly interested in the historical aspects of the Cause and was very curious to know what had caused the rift between the sons of Bahaullah. Mr. Nayer Afnan suggested that he should visit Mirza Majdedine who was then in his eighties and living in Acre. Mr. Safiniya welcomed the idea and invited us to return to Jerusalem the following week to hear the outcome of the visit.

Upon our return, he told us that he had had a long conversation with Mirza Majdedine whom he had found both intelligent and alert in mind. The first thing that he had told Safiniya was that he accepted the will of Bahaullah and there was no dispute about it – first the Master and then Mirza Mohammad Ali. What went wrong, according to Mirza Majdedine was that the Master had claimed that he was a new revelation. To this Safiniya responded that in his many readings of the writings of the Master he had never come across such a claim made by him, that the plaque at the gate of his house at No. 7 Persian Street in Haifa named him as Abdul Baha Abbas (Abdul Baha translating as Servant of Baha) and that if Mirza Majdedine had any written proof that the Master had made such a claim he would be very interested to see it. Mirza Majdedine did not have any such documentation to prove his point. This was news to us as well, since we had never heard these accusations being made of the Master by his brothers. We then asked Mr. Safiniya what his own conclusion was, considering the accusation, lack of proof thereof and this being put forward as the reason for the serious disagreement between the half brothers. Mr. Safiniya could not figure it out and remained baffled by the story.

Considering my relations with the children and grandchildren of the ‘covenant breakers’, whether the offspring of Yahya Sobhiyeh Azal, or the brothers of the Master, I was only following the example set by my grandfather, Abdul Baha. He had sent for the sons and grandchildren of Azal, who lived in Famagusta in Cyprus to come and live in Haifa. Mirza Ahmad Azal, the son of Subhi Azal, Jalal Azal and his sister Na’ereh Khanum, both grandchildren of Subhi Azal, did so. Mirza Ahmad lived in the Pilgrim’s house next to the shrine of the Bab on Mt. Carmel. Na’ereh Khanum was for many years, the dame de companie of Bahiyyeh Khanum, the Master’s sister, and Jalal Azal, with the recommendation of the Master, found a job in the civil service and both remained in Haifa until the end of the British Mandate in 1948.

The Master considered the family of Yahya Sobhiyeh Azal innocent and did not blame them for the split between Bahaullah and his brother, though he had been the first to refute Bahaullah’s mission by claiming that he was ‘him whom God shall make manifest’. Just the opposite, he brought them back into the family and the Cause and did not hold them responsible for what their father or grandfather had done. In the same way, how could I hold Negar [Bahai-Emsallem] or any of the other descendants of the original breakaway branches of the family responsible for what their grandfathers had done?

At this point I would like to stress the contrast between the Master’s attitude and that of Shoghi Effendi who not only accused us of being covenant breakers, but went on to claim that ‘covenant breaking is transmitted through the mother’s milk’ – (as was said about you, Parvine). What covenant had we broken? The four daughters of the Master and their families accepted and respected the will of Abdul Baha regarding the Guardianship of Shoghi Effendi. There was never any dispute there. Mirza Mohammad Ali and those around him accepted the will of Bahaullah, but manufactured the accusation that the Master had claimed that he was a new revelation (though they could not provide any proof of it) and therefore broke away from him. In other words, the Master had been at fault and their actions justified.

When it came to Shoghi Effendi, all the family obediently accepted him as the Guardian of the Cause. The family did not break any covenant and accepted every word in the will of Abdul Baha regarding Shoghi Effendi’s position. So on what basis were we deemed covenant breakers?

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The Qasr (The Mansion) of Bahji

By Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid

After Shoghi Effendi assumed the Guardianship of the Bahai Faith he was very keen to get the Mansion refurbished and restored to the original condition it was in at the time when Baha'ullah lived there, which was until his passing away in 1892. Since that time, Bahau'llah's family – those that came to be designated as covenant breakers – had lived there. Abdul Baha himself, his wife and four daughters, their husbands and children lived in Akka in Abboud's house and the Saraya of Abdulla Pasha, and later in Haifa, at No. 7 Persian Street, a house built with funds contributed by Bahais throughout the world.

Shoghi Effendi asked Mirza Jalal, son of Sultan al Shuhada (King of the Martyrs) to assume this task. To start with it was necessary to purchase the property. It had not been purchased at the time of Baha'ullah, as is claimed in *The Priceless Pearl* (p. 231). Neither Baha'ullah nor the Master had the kind of money required to purchase such 'a building, unique in Palestine for its majestic style of architecture' (ibid). It had been inherited by numerous descendants of the original owner, Audi Khommar, the rich Syrian merchant who originally owned the Qasr (Arabic for palace). These had to be tracked down in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, and their individual shares bought. It took Mirza Jalal two to three years to find each one of them and to purchase their share. This required funds which the Guardian had said he would be happy to pay – at the conclusion of these transactions. Mirza Jalal did not have the necessary funds at hand, so his wife, Rouha Khanum, one of the four daughters of Abdul Baha, who was a good friend of Mrs. Styvesant Chanler, a wealthy Bahai, asked her whether it would be possible for her to give them a loan for the sum required, at the end of which the Guardian would repay the debt. Mrs. Chanler wrote back to say that she would be happy not only to provide the loan, but would be honoured to pay for the purchase of the Mansion. This Rouha Khanum assured her would not be necessary but accepted the loan until the transactions were all completed. This was duly done, and the loan paid back.

The next task facing Mirza Jalal was to vacate the Mansion. The building had been occupied by Baha'ullah and his family since the late 1880s. The family consisted of the descendants of Baha'ullah and his brother Agha Mousa Kalim and their respective families. At the time Mirza Jalal sought to vacate of the Mansion some 40 years or more had passed upon their occupancy. There was no law and no way of forcing those who had lived for so long in the Mansion to leave. The only way was to settle the matter amicably. He therefore went to see Mr. Mousa Bahai, who was the youngest son of Mirza Mohammad Ali, and a prominent member of the family. He explained that Shoghi Effendi had purchased the Mansion and wanted to repair and refurbish it to keep the home in which Baha'ullah had spent the last years of his life as a place of pilgrimage for the Bahai world. Mr. Mousa Bahai concurred with the idea and asked for a period of two months to find alternative accommodation for the different members of the family and vacate the mansion. This was duly done and he gave the keys to Mirza Jalal who in turn delivered them to the Guardian.

The paragraph that appears in Moojan Momen's article entitled 'Covenant, The, & Covenant-breakers' in Bahai Library Online (written for possible inclusion in The Bahai Encyclopedia) regarding the Mansion of Bahji says:

'In 1929 they were forced to evacuate the Mansion of Bahji as they had allowed it to deteriorate to such a point that it was no longer habitable. They remained in buildings surrounding Bahji until 1957'.

As stated above, they were not ‘forced’ out by the state of disrepair and deterioration, nor was ‘its roof caving in’ as stated in *The Priceless Pearl* (p. 231). Both accounts are highly exaggerated, the former drawing on the latter as its source. The truth of the matter is that Mirza Jalal first had to purchase the property, then negotiate the hand-over, for which, incidentally, the family refused any compensation, financial or otherwise. Also, most of the family did not remain ‘in buildings surrounding Bahji until 1957’ (ibid.) but upon leaving the Qasr moved to Haifa and Acre. These errors in Moojan Momen’s article are but two of unfortunately many that exist in that article alone.

In *The Priceless Pearl* it is stated (p. 232) that upon the completion of the repairs, refurbishment and furnishing of the Mansion Shoghi Effendi invited the High Commissioner to Bahji to show him the completed works. He had asked His Excellency

‘…if he did not feel that such a place as this, so sacred in its associations to Baha’is the world over, far transcended the right to be considered any individual’s private residence and should be preserved as a place of pilgrimage and an historical museum? His Excellency, no doubt as much impressed by the advocate as by the testimony, agreed and the Mansion remained in Shoghi Effendi’s hands.’

Of course it remained in Shoghi Effendi’s hands. The Mansion (Qasr) had been purchased from its original owners and the family of Mohammad Ali had willingly vacated it.

Years later, when Hassan Shahid, the son of Mirza Jalal, had gone to see Mr. Mousa Bahai (who was the Haifa Land Registrar) about some land registry matters, the latter had told him that when his father, Mirza Jalal had gone to see him regarding his family vacating the Mansion, he had spoken so eloquently, so gently and kindly, and had explained the situation so convincingly that he had immediately accepted to cooperate with the request.

In *The Priceless Pearl* (p. 173) it is stated that as late as 1948, ‘at the end of the British Mandate in Palestine and expected outbreak of war, Majdedeen and Shoah Bahai were living in the Mansion – if the Arabs came, the consequences are only too clear.’

But how could Majdedeen and Shoah Bahai have been in the Mansion in 1948 when it was in Shoghi Effendi’s hands since the late 20s?

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Touba Khanum

Touba Khanum (1880 – 1959) married **Mirza Mohsen Afnan** (1853 – 1927). He was the son of Afnaneh Kabir, the brother-in-law of the Bab.

Touba Khanum was a dignified, well-read (Persian literature was an important part of her life, Ferdowsi's Shahnameh always at her side), long-suffering lady who had to live through the pain of losing her husband, seeing her son Ruhi thrown out of the Cause, the death of her young (early twenties) son Fuad, in the London blitz, and upon the marriage of her daughter Soraya to Dr. Feizy Afnan, be the subject of one of the Guardian's cables that declared the whole family as outcasts, including (posthumously) Fuad, who, until the last day of his short life, had been an active member of the Baha'i community in London. She suffered a nervous breakdown from which she never completely recovered and was a semi invalid for the rest of her life.

Mirza Mohsen, like the other three sons-in-law of the Master, was a business man who nevertheless was always ready to do whatever he was called upon to do in the service of the Cause, of which there was plenty.

They had three sons and one daughter: Ruhi, Soraya, Soheil, Fuad.

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Writings

The following are letters, essays, and comments by various members of ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s family:

- Letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’is of Iran, 1970. By Ruhi Afnan. (PDF file, 30 pages)
  Letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’is of Iran, 1970 By Ruhi Afnan. (In Farsi)
- Letter to *The Independent* newspaper, November 11, 1993. By Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid, in response to this article. (JPG image files)
- Letter to Mr. Adib Taherzadeh, member of the Universal House of Justice, December 1994. By Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid, in response to his book *The Covenant of Baha’u’llah*. Page 1. Page 2. Page 3. Page 4. Page 5. Page 6. Page 7. Page 8. (JPG image files). Translations of original language quotations in the letter (Microsoft Word DOC file).
- Letter to the Universal House of Justice, May 2, 1997. By Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid, in response to the UHJ’s designation of her daughter Parvine as a “Covenant-breaker.” Page 1. Page 2. Page 3. (JPG image files)
- Comments About Sayyid Ali Afnan, Forough Khanum, and Their Sons . By Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid.
- The Qasr (the Mansion) of Bahji. By Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid.
- Stories Known in the Family Regarding Covenant-Breaking. By Hassan Jalal Shahid.
- Comments About Munib Shahid. By Hassan Jalal Shahid.

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Zahra Jalal Shahid

Zahra Khanum (1912-2004)

The second daughter of Rouha Khanum and Mirza Jalal Shahid was also enamoured of medicine. She applied and was accepted as a medical student at the American University Hospital of Beirut (AUH), Lebanon, where her brother, Munib, had trained. Fate, however, planned matters otherwise – she was not able to go through with the training and could not become a doctor. Instead, she got a BSc in petroleum chemistry. She was offered a very good job by the Iraq Petroleum Company (ISB) upon graduation. Due to circumstances, however, she had to decline.

She often, like many members of the family, turned to her faith and convictions in the principles of the Baha'i Cause, though Shoghi Effendi considered her and her husband, Ruhi Afnan, (both the Guardian's first cousins), her parents, Mirza Jalal Shahid and Rouha Khanum (Shoghi Effendi's aunt), and her children, Iraj and Parviz, unworthy of membership in the community.

She was never able to pursue her interest in becoming a doctor nor to practice petroleum chemistry in Iraq. Her deep faith in the principles of the Baha'i Cause, however, were a lifelong interest which she and the rest of the family maintained.

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Zia Khanum

By Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid

Zia Khanum – *A lady of light* – what a lovely name my maternal grandmother had. A lady in every sense of the word she truly was, but her light – it seems to me – faced formidable challenges.

Zia Khanum's story is probably the saddest to write. She was the eldest of the Master ['Abdu'l-Baha]'s surviving children, all daughters, and in her twenties was married to Mirza Hadi Shirazi, a member of the Bab's family and thus an Afnan. They had five children, three sons and two daughters, the eldest of whom was Shoghi Effendi, then Rouhanguise, Mehranguise, Hossein and Riaz. She, like her two other sisters who had children, had a close, loving relationship with each and every one of their children.

While the Master, her father was alive, she, like her sisters, was pivotal in receiving, meeting and dealing with the many Baha'i pilgrims that came to Haifa to visit her illustrious father. Taking care of family and household matters, caring for the large community and the numerous pilgrims who gravitated around the three focal points of their pilgrimage: the shrine of the Bab on Mt. Carmel, that of Baha'u'llah at Bahji and the presence of the Master in Haifa, filled her life and called upon her many talents and abilities. In the family she was greatly respected for her quiet dignity, her wise and well thought out guidance, and her steady and balanced attitude to life. She was well versed in Farsi, Arabic (a language for which she had a lot of respect and which she considered important to master) and English.

In 1921 this world gets shattered. The Master passes away and in his will appoints his eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Cause established 77 years earlier, thanks to the twin revelations of the Bab and Baha'u'llah. A heavy burden for the young shoulders, mind and soul of a 24-year old student at Oxford, oblivious of what lay in store for him. Faced with the tremendous task that lay before him, his first reaction is to abandon the scene and seek solitude. This he does, first for about three months at his aunt Rouha Khanum's home (at No. 9 Persian Street, adjacent to the Master's home at No. 7) and then for about a year in Europe, mainly in Switzerland, with Ruhi Afnan, his cousin and good friend.

Zia Khanum had fulfilled her role in the household of the Master with its many-faceted responsibilities with utmost sincerity and dedication. After the passing of the Master and as the mother of a Guardian unsure and unsteady regarding his ability or worthiness to carry out the heavy responsibilities placed on his young shoulders, Zia Khanum played a crucial role, together with the dedicated assistance of the whole family, in keeping matters on course and in order, until Shoghi Effendi was finally ready to take up his duties. (See Ruhi Afnan's account of that period in his letter to the Spiritual Assembly of Iran dated 1970). Mother and son were very close and she was often the conduit to the busy and hard-working Guardian. One example is the advice that her nephew Fuad Afnan sought regarding his plan to go and study engineering at the Imperial College in London. He wanted to know whether the Guardian would have any objections to that. Her answer was that there was nothing to object to in such a plan, and Fuad took her word as representative of the Guardian's go ahead. Shoghi Effendi did not object while Fuad Afnan was in London; however, some years after he was killed, during the wartime blitz on London, he saw fit to posthumously 'cast him out' for going to London 'without his knowledge'. (See Shoghi Effendi's cable of November 2, 1941 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada regarding this matter).

With the passage of time, and particularly after Shoghi Effendi's marriage to Mary Maxwell [Ruhiyyih Khanum], in 1937, relations became strained and the day came when Zia Khanum found herself living in her father's house, now the home of the Guardian, and under orders not to communicate with both her daughters Rouhanguise and Mehranguise (for having married Nayer and Hassan Afnan), and two of her sons, Hussein and Riaz.

To make matters worse, and as she related to Ruhi Afnan (see his 1970 letter to the Spiritual Assembly of Iran), she found herself treated in a manner most unsuitable for one of the beloved daughters of the Master, well known and respected by the many Baha'is who had visited Haifa, and with whom strong bonds and enduring friendships had been forged based on the mutual respect and love of the Master and the Baha'i faith that Abdul Baha so eloquently preached. Under the circumstances, she found that her only recourse was to leave the Andaroun (as large family homes were called in Iran) and to retire to the simple house that her husband had on the slopes of Mount Carmel, set amid a lovely setting that his Shirazi love of gardens and his faithful servant/gardener Shehadi had helped him establish and tend. Known by the immediate family by the name of Karm (vineyard) they were eventually joined by their two sons, Hossein, who had been 'cast out' some years before, and by Riaz, who though still 'in', invoked the wrath of the Guardian for secretly seeing his mother Zia Khanum, in a small public garden in Haifa.

It was a sad, secluded and lonely life. Cast out and shunned by Baha'is upon the orders of their son, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahai Faith, they were cut off from their religious community, their social milieu and their purpose in life.

Her nephew, Hassan Shahid, well remembers the times when Zia Khanum would visit her sister Rouha Khanum at No. 9 Persian street, and standing at a window that gave on Shoghi Effendi's living quarters at No. 7 Persian street, would, with tears rolling down her face, mourn the 'aloneness' of Shoghi Effendi. Within a time span of over three decades from the busy, bustling, throbbing centre that had been the Master's home, family and fountainhead of inspiration, life now found them 'outcasts', rejected, shunned and designated as unworthy members of the Baha'i Faith. What great crimes had they committed? What heresy? What disloyalty?

Upon her death in 1951, her son Hussein called and informed Shoghi Effendi of the passing away of his mother. He, for the first time, visited Karm and arranged for his mother to be buried in the Baha'i cemetery in Haifa, where later he also laid his father to rest. In death, at least and at last, they were gathered back among the faithful.

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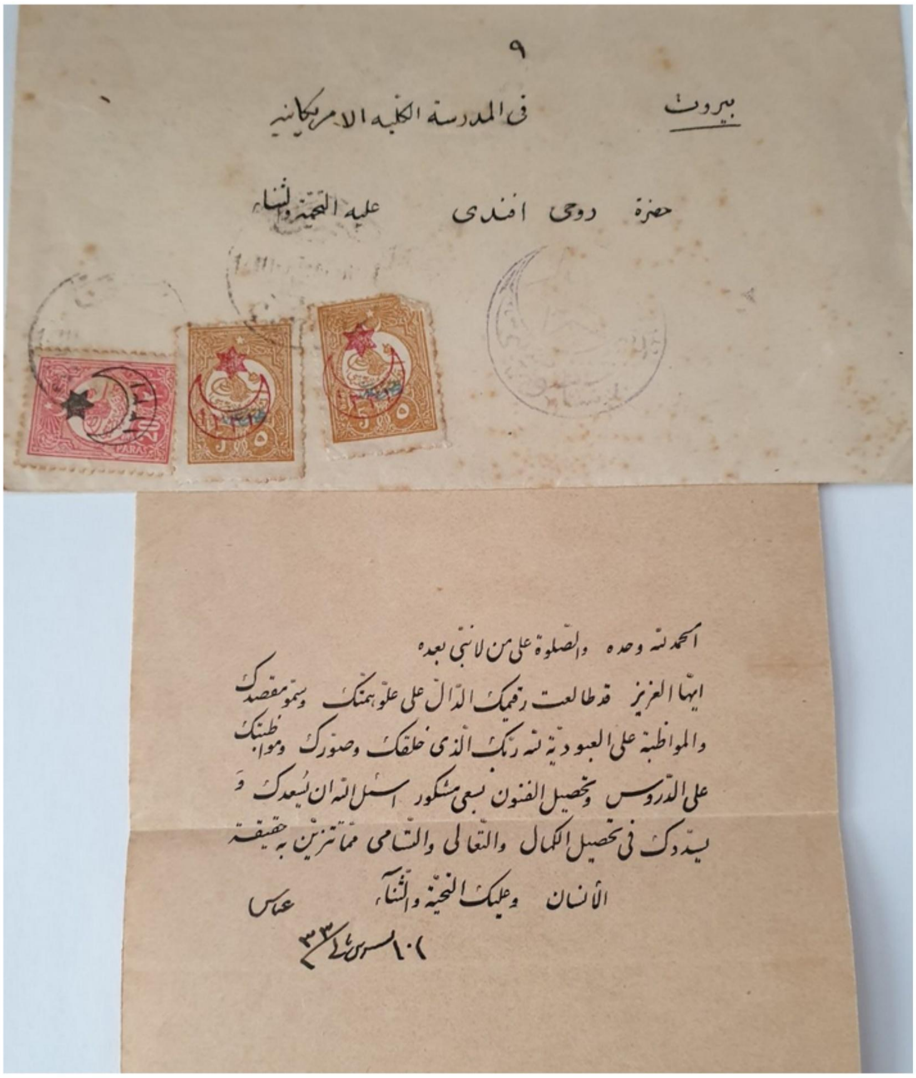
Historical

Letters and Tablets written by Abdu'l- Baha



٩

بيروت   فى المدرسة الكليه الامريكانيه

حضرة روحى افندى   عليه التحية والثناء

الحمد لله وحده والصلوة على من لا نبى بعده
ايها العزيز قد طالعت رقيمك الدال على علو همتك وسمو مقصدك
والمواظبة على العبودية لله ربك الذى خلقك وصورك ومواظبتك
على الدروس وتحصيل الفنون بسعى مشكور اسئل الله ان يسعدك و
يؤيدك فى تحصيل الكمال والتعالى والتسامى مما تتزين به حقيقة
الانسان وعليك التحية والثناء
عباس
١٠ نيسان ٣٣٣

Letter was written by Abdul Baha to his grandson Ruhi Afnan, 1917

دکتر پرسی المحترم

ایها الشاب النورانی ذو القلب الروحانی

انی استنشقت رائحة محبتک فی تلک البلاد الشاسعة واشکر الله بما انتشر انوار التعالیم فی تلک الارجاء والاقلیم فیا بشری لکل نفس لها اذن واعیة تسمع نداء منادی الملکوت وتهتز طربا بما اشرقت شمس الحقیقة من مطلع الآمال وتنطق بذکره الملأ الروحانیون فی صوامع التقدیس سبحان الرب ذو الجلال والاکرام وانک انت یا ایها المستبشر ببشارات الله قر عینا واشرح صدرا بما توجهت الیک الالطاف الرحمانیة من کل الجهات ووردت علی العین الصافیة العذبة الفرات وسکرت من الکأس الطافحة بصهباء الحیات ع ع

هو الابهی

[illegible]

الهی الهی ان عبدک هذا قد تمسّک [illegible] رحمانیتک وتشرّف بلقائک
فی یوم الظهور مطلع آیاتک حتی تشرّفت الارض بنور وجهه المنیر وان اباه قد
صعد الیک مؤمنا بک وبآیاتک الکبری ومشتاقا لجوار رحمتک العظمی رب
ارزقه ما تمنّی وشمّ نفحات عین رحمانیتک فی ممالکک الاخری انک انت الفضّال
ذو الجود الوهاب الکریم ای رب صاحبهم المصائب والبلایا فی سبیلک ان لما
عرج روحه الیک منعتهم اهل الظلم والطغیان ان یواروه فی التراب ودفنوه فی [illegible]
القفار [illegible] عنایتک وسمو رحمتک لاحبائک ان تجعل قبره حدیقة من حدائقک
تفوح منها روائح عفوک وغفرانک انک انت الکریم الرحیم ع ع

هو الله

ای محبوب علیه بهاء الله از موطن مألوف بتوفیق الله باشتعال [illegible]
قصد زیارت سجن اعظم نمودید بنظر حکمت کبری چنین تقدیر [illegible] شده که در آن خطه و دیار
بخدمات جلیلهٔ [illegible] وطلب رضای ربانی بپردازد و عنایات حضرت رحمن در حق شما

[illegible]

[illegible] قیام بر نصرت امر نمایند چون بحر بی پایان در موج و [illegible] نهنگها
نفوسیکه چون جبل راسخ در این طوفان اعظم ثابت و راسخند تا به کی
جنت استقامت حتی بمشام فؤاد از نفحات طیبهٔ بهشت معطر گردد باحباء الله
ان [illegible] الهی بارک علیکم من ملکوته الابهی وجبروته الاسنی و[illegible] الذین
نصروا امره فی هوا کلمة الله الا انهم من الفائزین الا انهم من المخلصین ع ع

هو الابهی

۵ [illegible]

جناب محمد علی علیه بهاء الله الابهی یا من فتح لسانه بذکر ربه ونطق ببرهان ربه
وتوجه الی الله و[illegible] آیاته الواضحه هنیئا لنفس [illegible] الی معین عنایته ودخل
حدیقة [illegible] شریعة هدایته وسعی فی اعلاء کلمته و[illegible] بنام [illegible] حمد کن خدا را
که موفق بر تبلیغ امر شدی و در نشر کلمة الله کوشیدی [illegible] شما در هر آنچه در [illegible]
قدس و مطلع جمال مشهود [illegible] و [illegible] تا تأییدات غیبیه حضرت احدیت
در جمیع احوال آنجناب را احاطه نماید تا آیهٔ هدایت در بین خلق مشهود گردی [illegible]
ثم هنیئا لک ع ع

هو الابهی

تعالیت یا الهی و تسامیت عن صعود طیور العرفان الی هواء بهاء عزّ جلالک

و تعالیت و تنزّهت ان تعارج عناکب الافکار الی سماء علاء فردانیتک

و تنسج لعاب الاوهام بیوت الادراک فی اوج کبریاء صمدانیتک

فغایة بلوغ العارفین العجز عن الادراک و منتهی صعود الواصلین القصور عن الوصول

و الاعتراف بالانکسار و الذل و الافتقار و عدم الامکان لتبیان

حمدک عرفانک حیث ان الامر کهذا ارجع عن النعت و الثناء

و الذکر و الوصف الی التبتّل الی باب احدیتک و التضرّع الی

رحبة ربوبیتک و ابتهل الیک ان تنظر الی فرع شجرة وحدانیتک

و غصن سدرة فردانیتک بعین الالطاف و تشمله لحظات عین الرحمن

و تؤیده فی جمیع الشئون و الاحوال و تنوّر وجهه بین ملأ الابرار و تجعله

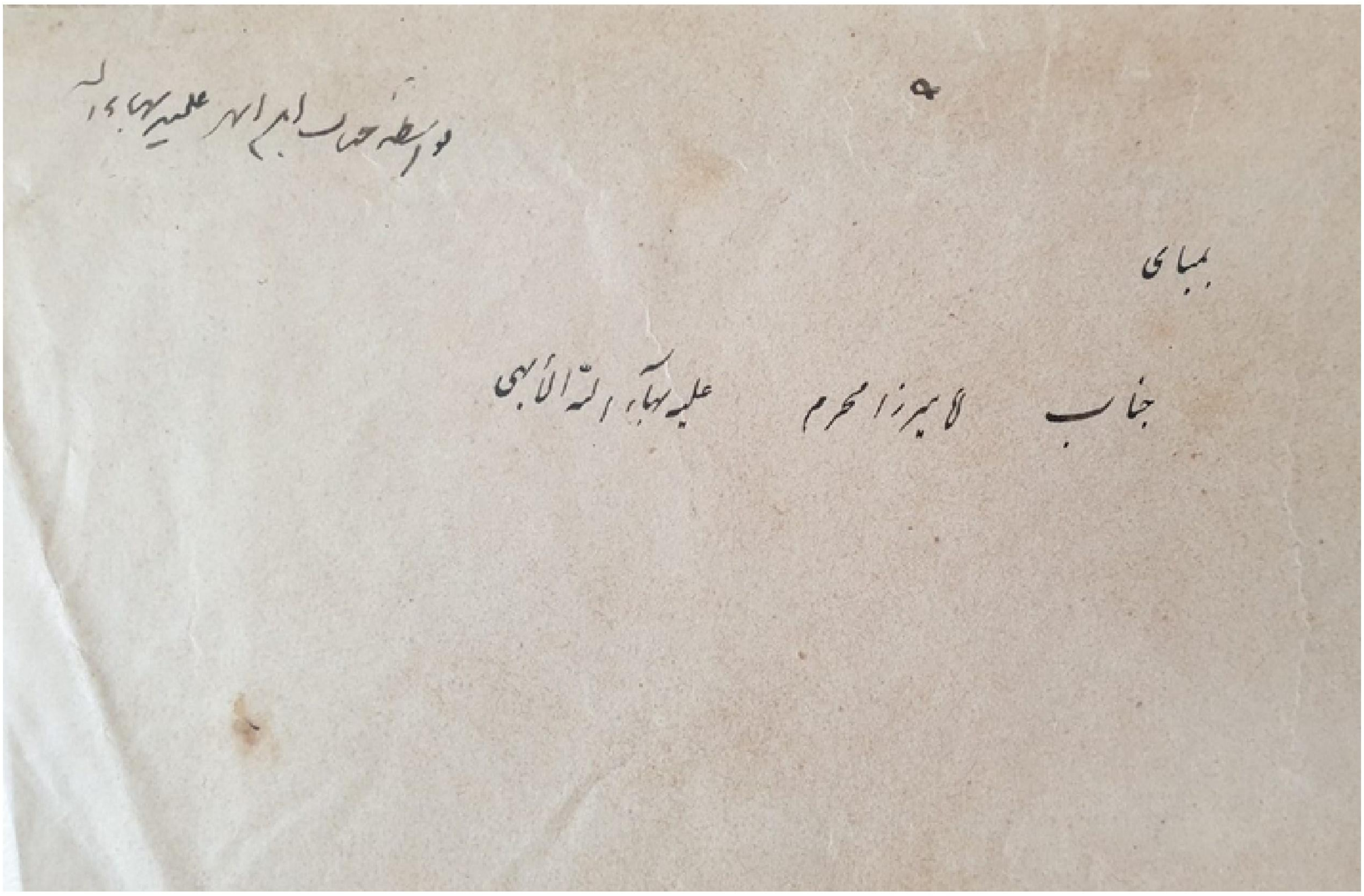
قدوة لملأ الاخیار ای ربّ انه ثبت علی عهدک و میثاقک

و رسخت قدمه فی طاعة امرک و قام بکلّ قوة علی الاستقامة

علی اعلاء کلمتک و ثبات محبتک و ایضاح برهانک

بین احبتک فاجعله لسان صدق علیّا و البهاء علیه

[illegible]



بواسطهٔ جناب ابن ابهر علیه بهاء الله

٥

بمبای

جناب ملا میرزا محرم علیه بهاء الله الأبهی

لا اعرف
يا يحي العاشق
عن الهود
ومن معه واورد
المشركين فى الجحيم
وانه جعل نار الخليل
رضوانا وانه لاغلب

[illegible] هذه الايات لان هذا قد نزل من عند الله المقتدر العليم على النمرود بعوضة من السماء [illegible] وانه لعلى كل شيء قديرا وانه لا اله الا هو وانه لعلى
قتله وانه لجعل البحر لبنى اسرائيل سبيلا وغرق الفرعون وملائه كلهم اجمعينا وانه لارسل على الخلق من عنده الانبياء حتى يدعوا
الناس اليه وانه لقادرا عليما يا قوم هذه ايات الله لا تكفروا به ولا تعرضوا عنه هنيئا لمن صدق به وامن بايات الله اذ
[illegible] الى الله باياته وبيناته ولا تقتلوا باسياف شركم وانه لا اله الا هو وانه لعلى كل شيء لقادرا مقتدرا
قديرا قيوما ان يا معشر البشر تالله قد اشرق شمس الله الاكبر وانتم احتجبتم عنه وكنتم
من اصحاب الكفر وانه لا اله الا هو وانه لسلطان مقتدر ان يا ملاء المشركين لم تفرون
من هذا المشرق الانور تالله لم يكن لاحد مفر لا اله الا هو سبحانه وتعالى
عما تصفون يا ملاء البشر فسبحانك اللهم يا الهى فاطر [illegible] المستتر
وانك انت الذى خلقتنى ورزقتنى وانك لقادرا مقتدر
وانك لسلطان على كل شيء وانك لكريم وهاب
[illegible] فيا قوم تالله قد ظهر جمال الله الاكبر
عن مشرق القدس كشمس الضحى
وكشف النقاب على
النور عن وجهه الاطهر

[illegible]

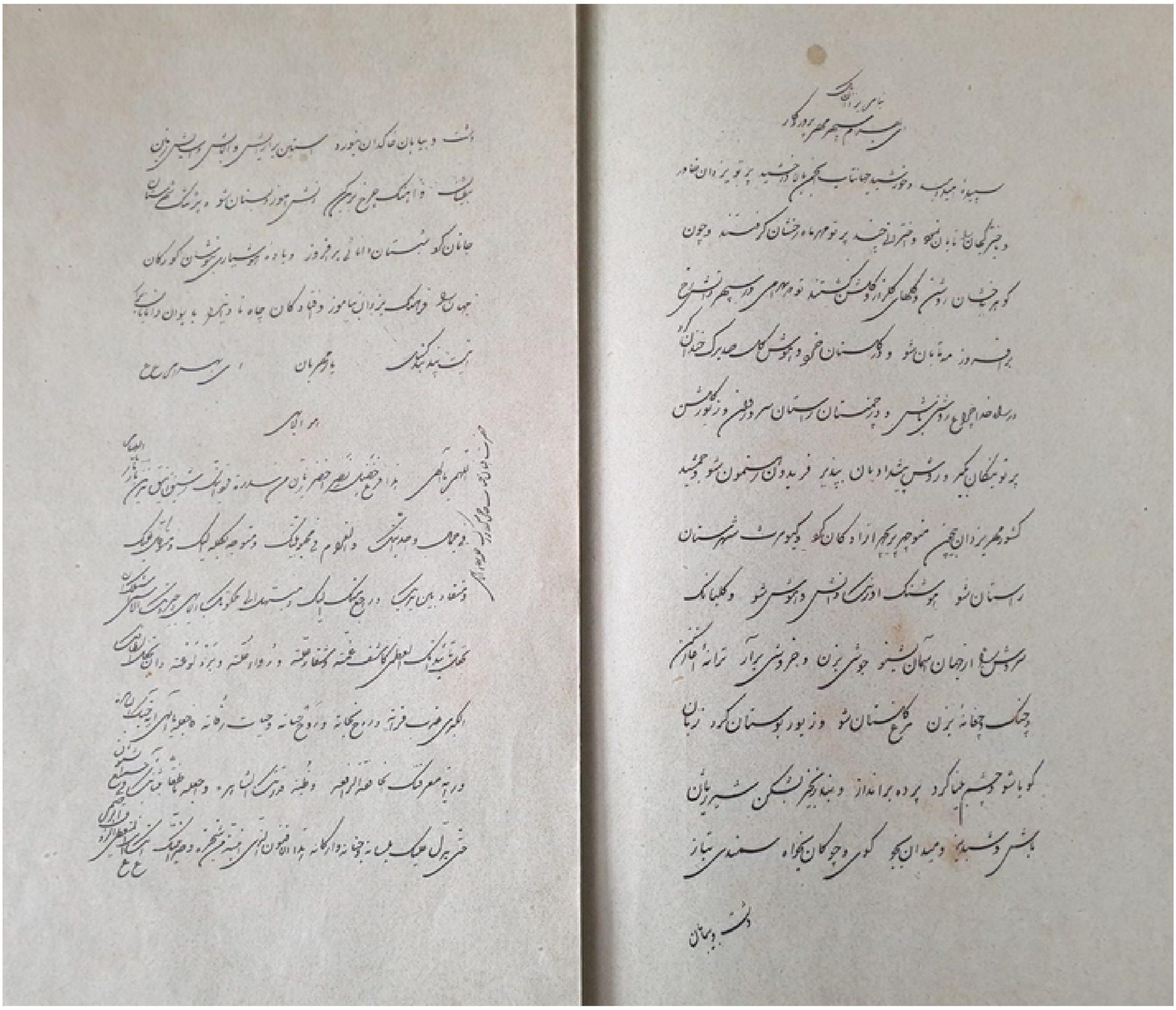
اصغر فيا ملاء البيان
[illegible] الذين [illegible]
[illegible] كان بكل
شيء عليما [illegible]
ان لا تفروا
[illegible] ولا تقولوا

[illegible] وانه لا اله الا هو وانه لسلطان [illegible]

[illegible]

هو الله

ای دوست عزیز نامه شما رسید فی الحقیقه در این مدت مشقت بسیار کشیدی و با جمیع مشقات و بلایای شما نسبت ببلایای من قطرهٔ از دریا بود و انسان باید که تحمل مشقات شاق نماید تا واضح و مشهود شود که ملکوتیست رحمانیست روحانیست در زمان خوشی و راحت تن و آسایش جان و جمعیت خاطر هر نفسی ممنونست ولی چون امتحان بمیان آید معلوم گردد کیست شما مأیوس مباش محزون مشو در خیال موت مباش از حیات بیزار مشو لوا را تنها مگذار مرد معقول باش و همت بکن انشاء الله تو سالیان زیاد زندگانی خواهی کرد و با آسایش و راحت کار خواهی نمود لذا بلا را میراث مگذار بالعکس بکمال انبساط در روح و ریحان صرف کن افکار خویش را تبدیل نما و از هر قیدی رهائی یاب آزاد باش از افکار بگذر اگر چنین نمائی ضامن و کفیلم که راحت جان و آسایش وجدان یابی من با تو هنوز خیلی کار دارم چه طور راضی میشوی از این عالم بروی این معلوم است که رحلت از این عالم راحت است و نجات یافتن اعظم نعمت ولی شما نباید در فکر راحت باشید بلکه در فکر تحمل زحمت و مشقت باشید مرقوم نموده بودی که بگذار بروم ابداً نخواهم گذاشت که بروی البته باید در اینجهان زنده باشی و وقتش هنوز نیامده مرقوم نموده بودی که سه مرتبه خواب دیدم که از این عالم رفته ام اما تعبیرش میگویند که هر کس چنین خواب ببیند دلیل بر طول حیاتست و اما بیان جمال مبارک که اینجهان تاریک است و خدا تو را نجات خواهد داد نجات حقیقی دخول در ملکوت است و تحمل مشقت در حیات زیرا عاقبت این نجات ابدیست و اما قبری که برای تو معین فرموده بودند آن بیتی است که در ملکوت بکلی تو بنا خواهند فرمود اما مسئله آنکه حیات خود را اسیورطه نمودی من یک موی ترا بیک میلیون دلار نمیدهم باید وجود انسان از برای امر نافع باشد میلیونها دلار چه فایده و اما رفتن با یاران و شهید شدن صبر کن تمجید شما آسانست وقتش من بتو خبر میدهم ای دکتر خدا مانند لوا قرینهٔ بتو داده دلجو و مهربان غمخوار و خوش اخلاق چگونه راضی میشوی که آن را تنها بگذاری و بروی باید در دو جهان با هم باشید اگر تو راضی که او را تنها بگذاری لوا راضی نمی شود که تنها بروی و من شهادت میدهم اگر یک ملیار از برای او میراث بگذاری یک موی تو را با آن بدل ننماید باری از این فکرها بگذر الحمد لله کلفتی نداری آلوده نداری کثرت عائله نداری چرا پریشانی باید مسرور باشی بی قید باشی آزاد باشی دلشاد باشی و از هیچ وقایعی متأثر مباشی و علیک البهاء الابهی ع ع



[illegible] ۶۹

هو الله [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] بهاء الله ع ع

[illegible]

هو الله

[illegible]

[illegible] ع ع

هو الله [illegible]

[illegible] ع ع

[illegible]

[illegible] ع ع

[illegible]

هو الابهی [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] ع ع

[illegible] ع ع

[illegible] ع ع

میرزا جلال افندی [illegible]

[illegible]

هو الله

جناب آقا میرزا جلال [illegible]
مکتوب [illegible] ملاحظه گردید

در باب خانه [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] شما [illegible]

[illegible]

هو الله

ای یار قدیم من فی الحقیقه ثابتی و راسخ و نابتی و ناطق از قرار که
حضرت ابن ابهر میفرماید صفحات هندوستان استعداد عظیمی دارد
هنود رنودند و باسرار پنهان پی برده اند وقت آن آمد که حضرت
محرم آنان را محرم راز کند و همدم و هم آواز نماید اگر ممکن ببعضی صفحات
آن اطراف مصافی بجوئی و تا دهلی و پنجاب بشتابی و در هر جا
ذهاب و ایاب نمائی و گلشن ازرا آب دهی ولی باید نهایت
ملایمت و مهربانی نمائی و تحمّل سختی و درشتی از هر یار و اغیار
کنی مبلّغین باید آئین جمال ابهی گیرند تلخ شیرین گردد و زهر
و حنظل شهد و انگبین شود آنجناب همواره این راه صواب پیموده اند
باید دمبدم شیرین تر و شکرین تر شوند زیرا هر چه حلاوت بیشتر
میدان هدایت واسعتر گردد و علیک البهآء الابهی
ع ع

هو الله الابهی

سبحانک اللهم یا الهی انزل من سحاب سمآء فضلک و جودک امطار التی سبقت کل شیء من الغیب و الشهود

و انبت کثیر الارض الطیبة نباتا حسنا و زینها بازهار تهتز و تربت و انبتت من کل زوج بهیج

رب انت تنزل البرکة علی من تشاء من عبادک تهب لمن تشاء اناثا و

لمن تشاء ذکورا فاجعل و ردی الیک ان تجعل هذا المولود

محفوظا فی الغطاء ممدودا فی الخصال مبارکا للآباء و الامهات و الاحباب

متمتعا بالرضاعة من ثدی حبک و انشأه فی ظل سدرة

فضلک و الطافک و التربیة فی حضن عنایتک و الهامک

فی حجر موهبتک و سعه فی ملکوتک بالحسن و اجعل

خلقه من احسن الخلق بمنّک و عنایتک و احفظه

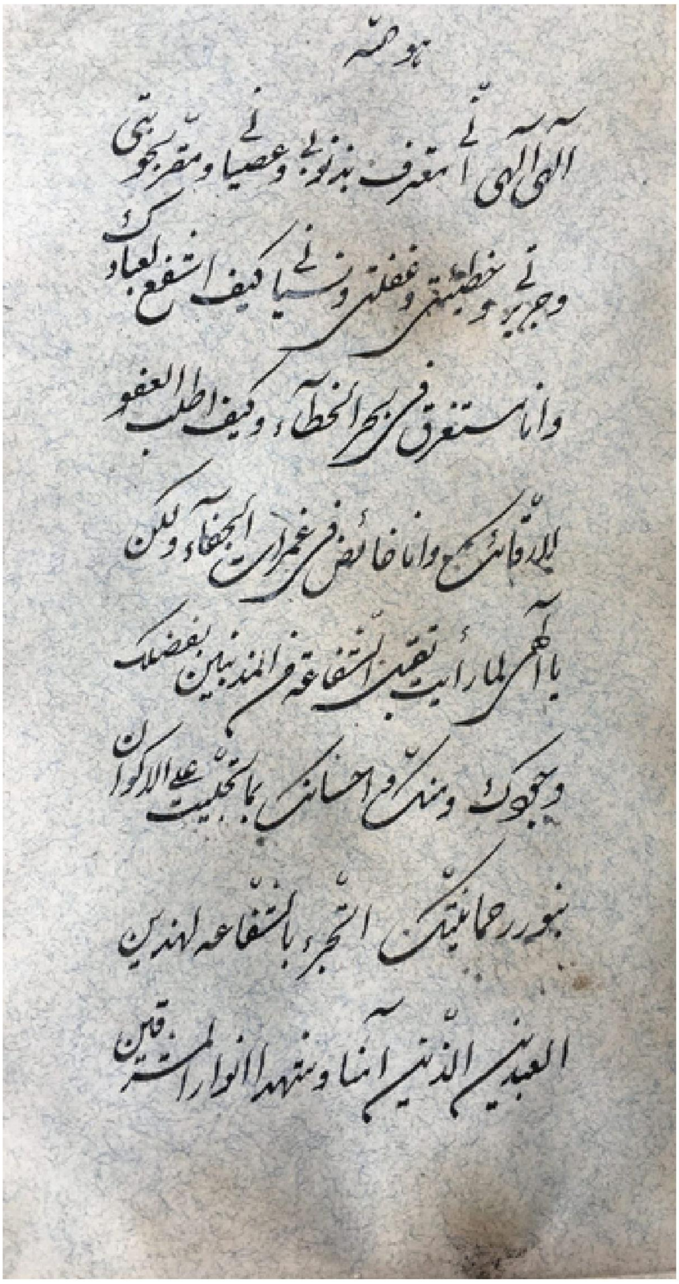
فی کهف حفظک و کلائتک و احرسه تحت

انک انت الکریم الرحیم

الزبر والصحائف بین المشارق والمغارب وبقدم الالواح
واللوائح من عبادک المخلصین الی عبدک هذا المنیب الی الملکین
ویوالی السعی الموفور فی کل عشیّ وبکور فی هذا الامر المشکور ولم
یفتر اونه من الالوان حتی فی بطون اللیالی والاسحار
حتی اعتراه العلل والامراض واصبح طریح الفراش
وعلیل المزاج ونحیل الاعضآء وضعیف القوی معذلک
مادهن فی خدمة امرک ونشر نفحات حدیقة قدسک الی
ان ضج ضجیج الظمآن الی معین الحیوان وحن حنین الورقآء
الی الایکة الغنآء والحدیقة الغلبآء شوقاً الی اللقآء وطار
دوحه من الحضیض الادنی الی الاوج الاعلی ووفد علیک
بانجذاب واشتیاق لا یتناهی رب اکرم المثوی
فی الجنة المأوی وتجلّ علیه بآیات القبول حتی تترنح
من تلک الصهبآء واجعل له مقعد صدق علیاً فی جوار
رحمتک الکبری وارفعه مقاماً سامیاً فی الرفارف الاعلی
واجعله یتخذ وکراً فی اعلی فروع سدرة المنتهی

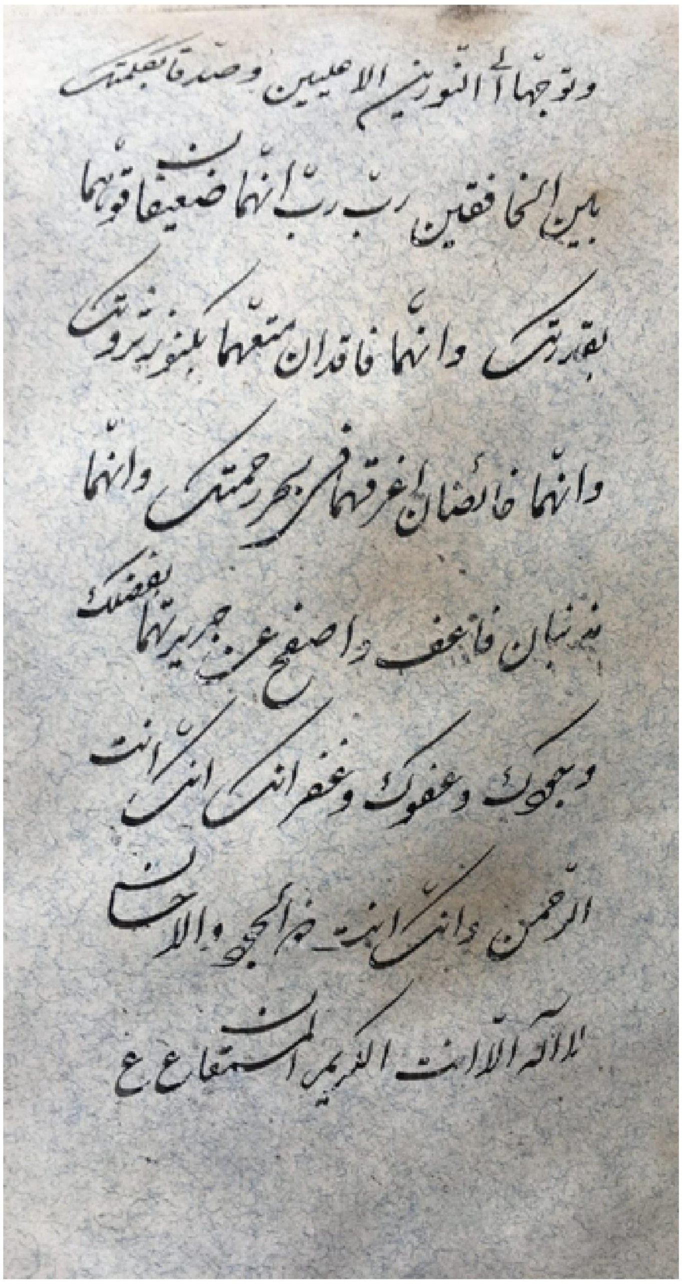
ویترنم کالطیور الصادحة فی الجواء وادخله فی حدیقة
اللقآء وتجلّ علیه بالفیوضات الی ابد الآباد انک انت
الکریم انک انت الرحیم انک انت العفو الغفور اللطیف
ثم افرغ الصبر یا الهی علی بقیته الصالحة وذریته الطیبة
واجعل لهم الطافک سلوة فی هذا المصاب العظیم
ورحمة وسکوناً فی هذا المأتم العقیم واجعلهم ورثة
فضائله وحفظة مقامه وسرج ذکره وامواج بحره ونجوم
افقه واشجار حدیقة العلیا انک انت المؤید الکریم
العزیز الوهاب   ع ع

هو الله   ای ثابت بر پیمان   نامهٔ شما رسید مضامین
دلیل ثبوت ورسوخ بر نبأ عظیم بود فی الحقیقه قائم
بر خدمتی جز نشر نفحات الله واعلاء کلمة الله مقصدی
نداری اگر جمیع یاران کمر خدمت بر عبودیت آستان
مقدس بربندند در اندک مدتی نسیم معطر جنت
ابهی مشام اکثر اهل ایران را معطر نماید الیوم



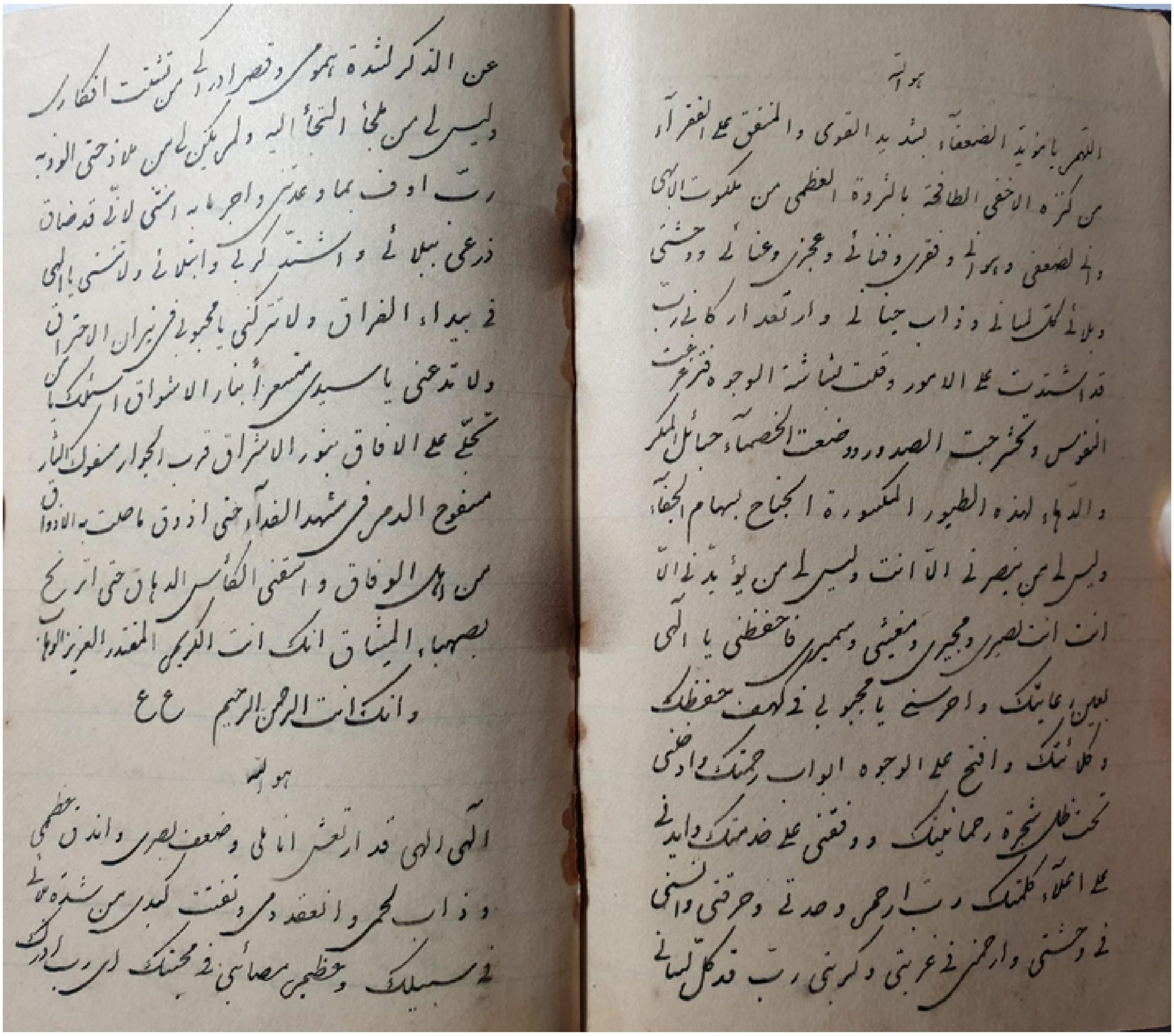
هو الله

الهی الهی انّی اعترف بذنوبی وعصیانی ومقرّ بجرمی
وجریرتی وخطیئتی وغفلتی ونسیانی کیف اشفع للعباد
وانا مستغرق فی بحر الخطایا وکیف اطلب العفو
للارقّاء وانا خائض فی غمرات الجفاء ولکن
یا الهی لمّا رأیت تقرّب الشّفاعة من المذنبین بفضلک
وجودک ومنّک واحسانک بانّک تجلّیت علی الاکوان
بنور رحمانیّتک التجأت بالشّفاعة لهذین
العبدین الّذین آمنا وشهدا انوار المشرقین



وتوجّها الی النّورین الاعلیین وصدّقا بکلمتک
بین الخافقین ربّ ربّ انّهما ضعیفان فقوّهما
بقدرتک وانّهما فاقدان متّعهما بکنوز ثروتک
وانّهما خائضان اغرقهما فی بحر رحمتک وانّهما
مذنبان فاعف واصفح عن جریرتهما بفضلک
وجودک وعفوک وغفرانک انّک انت
الرّحمن وانّک انت ذو الجود والاحسان
لا اله الّا انت الکریم المستعان ع ع

Pages from Ruha Khanum’s prayer book in her own handwriting

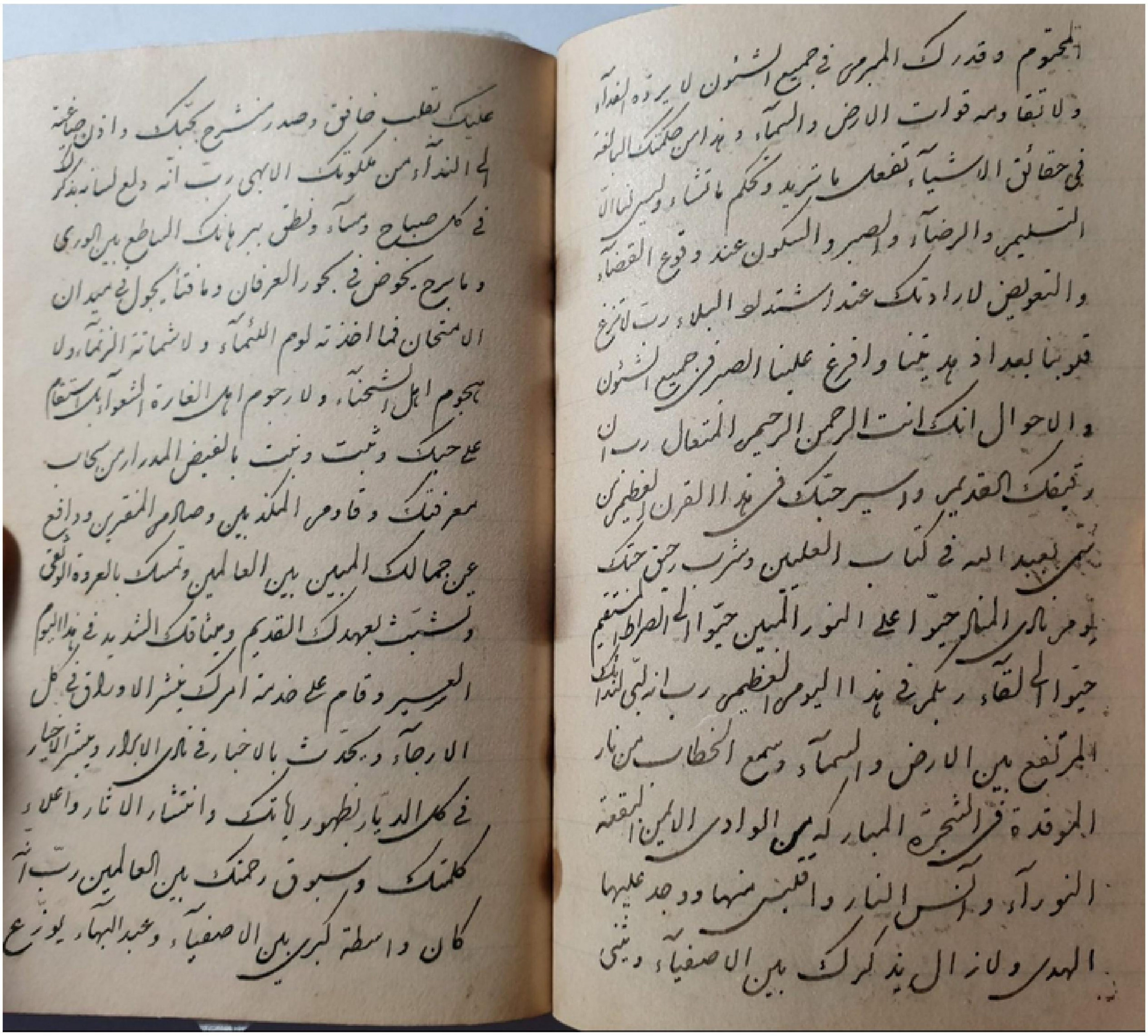


هو الله

اللهم يا مؤيد الضعفاء بشديد القوى والمشفق على الفقراء
من كنوزه الاخفى الطافحة بالثروة العظمى من ملكوت الابهى
وانى لضعفى وهوانى وفقرى وفنائى وعجزى وعنائى ووحشتى
وبلائى كل لسانى وذاب جنانى وارتعد اركانى رب
قد اشتدت على الامور وقلت بشاشة الوجوه فتزعزعت
النفوس وتحرجت الصدور ووضعت الخصماء حبائل المكر
والدهاء لهذه الطيور المكسورة الجناح بسهام الجفاء
وليس لى من ينصرنى الا انت وليس لى من يؤيدنى الا
انت انت نصيرى ومجيرى ومغيثى وسميرى فاحفظنى يا الهى
بعين رعايتك واحرسنى يا محبوبى فى كهف حفظك
وكلائتك وافتح على الوجوه ابواب رحمتك وادخلنى
تحت ظل شجرة رحمانيتك ووفقنى على خدمتك وايدنى
على اعلاء كلمتك رب ارحم وحدتى وحرقتى وآنسنى
فى وحشتى وارحمنى فى غربتى وكربتى رب قد كل لسانى
عن الذكر لشدة همومى وقصر ادراكى من تشتت افكارى
وليس لى من ملجأ التجئ اليه ولم يكن لى من ملاذ حتى الوذ به
رب اوف بما وعدتنى واجر ما به امنتنى لانى قد ضاق
ذرعى ببلائى واشتد كربى وابتلائى ولا تنسنى يا الهى
فى بيداء الفراق ولا تتركنى يا محبوبى فى نيران الاحتراق
ولا تدعنى يا سيدى مستعراً بنار الاشواق اسئلك بما
تجلى على الافاق بنور الاشراق قرب الجوار مسفوك الثار
مسفوح الدم فى مشهد الفداء حتى اذوق ما حلت به الاذواق
من اهل الوفاق واسقنى الكأس الدهاق حتى اترنح
بصهباء الميثاق انك انت الكريم المقتدر العزيز الوهاب
وانك انت الرحمن الرحيم   ع ع

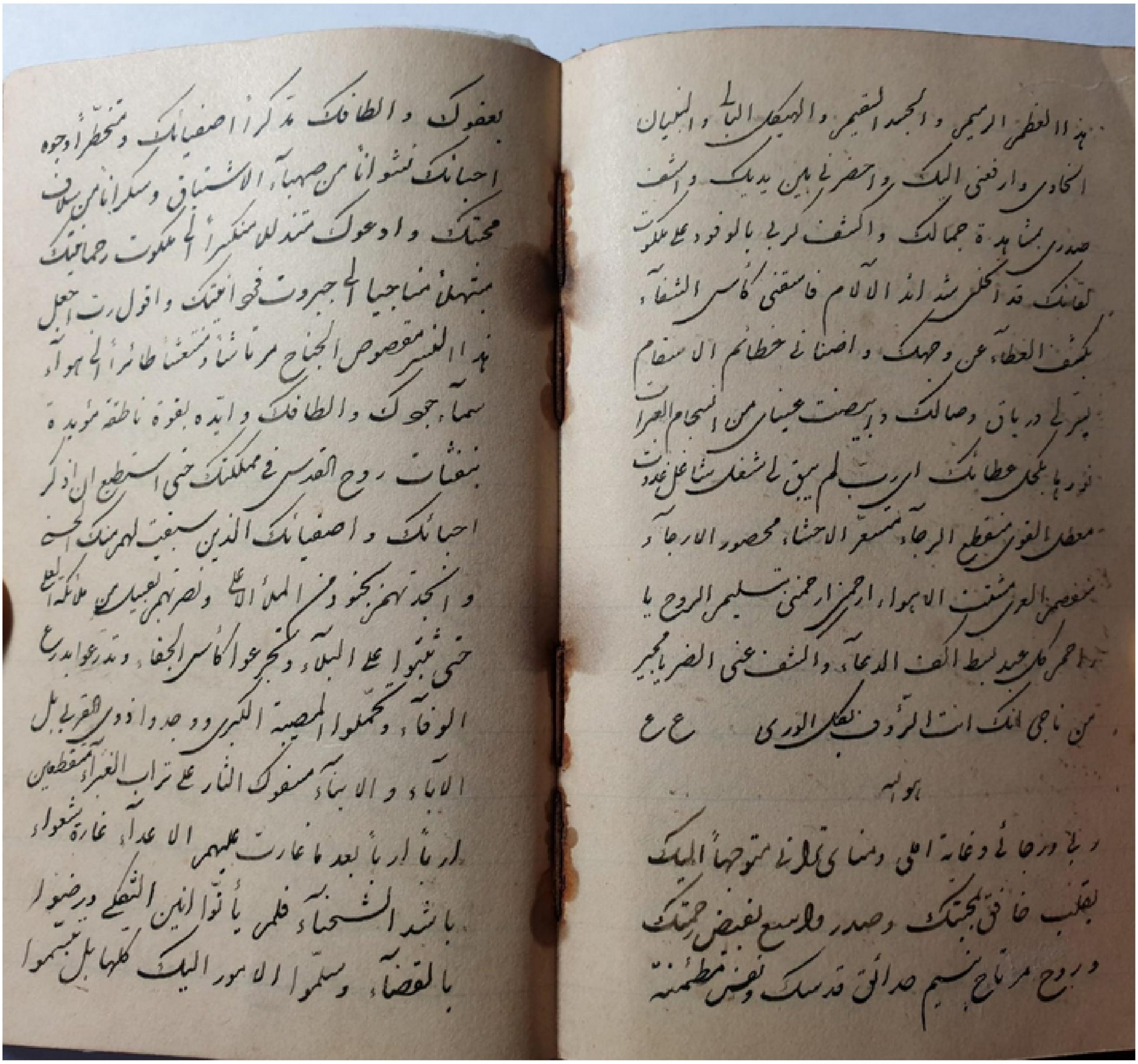
هو الله

الهى الهى قد ارتعش اناملى وضعف بصرى واندق عظمى
وذاب لحمى وانعقد دمى ونفت كبدى من شدة بلائى
فى سبيلك وعظم مصائبى فى محبتك اى رب ادرك



المحتوم وقدرك المبرم في جميع الشئون لا يردّه الفدآء
ولا تقاومه قوات الارض والسمآء وهذا من حكمتك البالغة
في حقائق الاشيآء تفعل ما تريد وتحكم ما تشآء وليس لنا الّا
التسليم والرضآء والصبر والسكون عند وقوع القضآء
والتفويض لارادتك عند اشتداد البلاء رب لا تزغ
قلوبنا بعد اذ هديتنا وافرغ علينا الصبر في جميع الشئون
والاحوال انك انت الرحمن الرحيم المتعال رب ان
رقيقك القديم واسير حبك في هذا القرن العظيم من
يسمّى بعبد الله في كتاب العلّيين وشرب رحيق حبك
يوم نادى المناد حيّوا على النور المبين حيّوا الى الصراط المستقيم
حيّوا الى اللقآء ربكم في هذا اليوم العظيم رب انه لبّى لندائك
المرتفع بين الارض والسمآء وسمع الخطاب من نار
الموقدة في الشجرة المباركة من الوادي الايمن البقعة
النورآء وآنس النار واقتبس منها ووجد عليها
الهدى ولازال يذكرك بين الاصفيآء ويثني

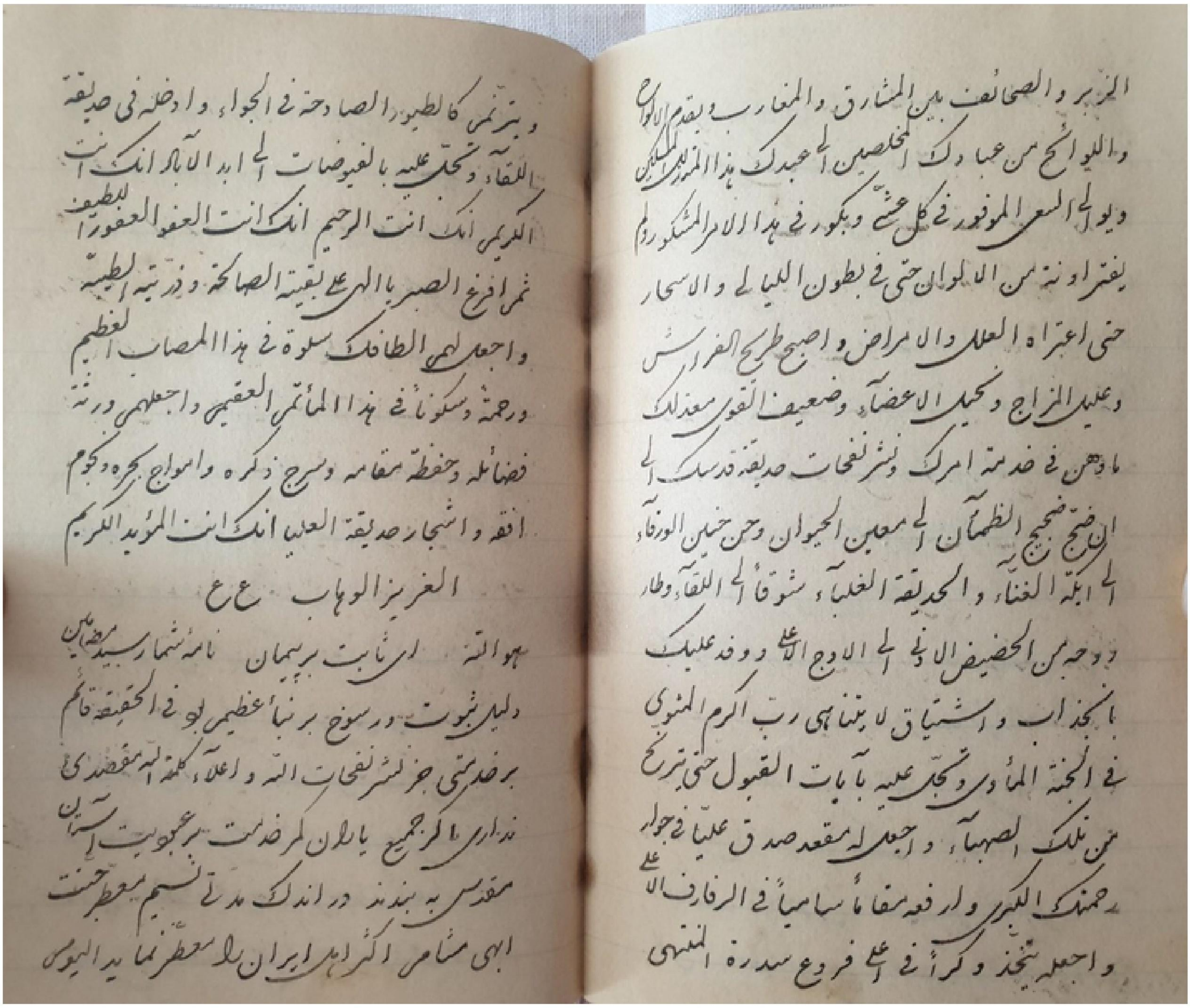
عليك بقلب خافق وصدر منشرح بحبك واذن صاغية
الى الندآء من ملكوتك الابهى رب انه ولع لسانه بذكرك
في كل صباح ومسآء ونطق ببرهانك الساطع بين الورى
وما برح يخوض في بحور العرفان وما فتأ يجول في ميدان
الامتحان فما اخذته لومة اللئمآء ولا شماتة الزنمآء ولا
هجوم اهل الشحنآء ولا رجوم اهل الغارة الشعوآء بل استقام
على حبك وثبت ونبت بالفيض المدرار من سحاب
معرفتك وقاوم المكذبين وصادم المنكرين ودافع
عن جمالك المبين بين العالمين وتمسك بالعروة الوثقى
وتشبّث بعهدك القديم وميثاقك الشديد في هذا اليوم
العظيم وقام على خدمة امرك بنشر الالواح في كل
الارجآء وتحدث بالاخبار في نادي الابرار وبشر الاخيار
في كل الديار بظهور آياتك وانتشار الآثار واعلاء
كلمتك وسطوع رحمتك بين العالمين رب انه
كان واسطة كبرى بين الاصفيآء وعبد البهآء يوزع



هذا العظم الرميم والجسد السقيم والهيكل البالي والبنيان
المتهادي وارفعني اليك واحضرني بين يديك واشرح
صدري بمشاهدة جمالك واكشف كربي بالوفود على ملكوت
لقائك قد انحلني شدة الآلام فاسقني كأس الشفاء
بكشف الغطاء عن وجهك واضناني عظائم الاسقام
يسرلي دريان وصالك وابيضت عيناي من انسجام العبرات
فنورها بكحل عطائك اي رب لم يبق لي شغل شاغل وعدت
معطل القوى منقطع الرجاء مستعر الاحشاء محصور الارجاء و
منغص العيش مشتت الاهواء ارحمني ارحمني بتسليم الروح يا
ارحم كل عبد بسط اكف الدعاء واكشف عني الضر يا مجير
من ناجاك انك انت الرؤف بكل الورى ع ع

هو الله

ربنا ورجائنا وغاية املي ومناي تراني متوجها اليك
بقلب خافق بمحبتك وصدر واسع بفيض رحمتك
وروح مرتاح بنسيم حدائق قدسك ونفس مطمئنة
بعفوك والطافك تذكرا اصفيائك وتتخطر وجوه
احبائك نشوانا من صهباء الاشتياق وسكرانا من سلاف
محبتك وادعوك متذللا منكسرا الى ملكوت رحمانيتك
مبتهلا مناجيا الى جبروت فردانيتك واقول رب اجعل
هذا الكسير مقصوص الجناح مرتاشا ومنتعشا طائرا الى هواء
سماء جودك والطافك وايده بقوة ناطقة مؤيدة
بنفثات روح القدس في مملكتك حتى استطيع ان اذكر
احبائك واصفيائك الذين سبقت لهم منك الحسنى
وانجدتهم بجنود من الملأ الاعلى ونصرتهم بقبيل من ملائكة الابهى
حتى ثبتوا على البلاء وتجرعوا كأس الجفاء وتدرعوا بدروع
الوفاء وتحملوا المصيبة الكبرى ووجدوا ذوي القربى بل
الآباء والابناء مسفوك الدماء على تراب الغبراء مقطعين
اربا اربا بعد ما غارت عليهم الاعداء غارة شعواء
باشد الشحناء فلم يأتوا انين الشكوى ورضوا
بالقضاء وسلموا الامور اليك كلها بل تبسموا



الزبر والصحائف بين المشارق والمغارب وبتقدم الالواح
واللوائح من عبادك المخلصين الی عبدك هذا المنيب الیك المبتهل
ويوالی السعی الموفور فی كل عشیّ وبكور فی هذا الامر المشكور ولم
يفتر اونة من الاوان حتی فی بطون اللیالی والاسحار
حتی اعتراه العلل والامراض واصبح طريح الفراش
وعليل المزاج ونحيل الاعضآء وضعيف القوی ومع ذلك
ما وهن فی خدمة امرك ونشر نفحات حديقة قدسك الی
ان ضجّ ضجيج الظمآن الی معين الحيوان وحنّ حنين الورقآء
الی ايكة الغنآء والحديقة الغلبآء شوقاً الی اللقآء وطار
روحه من الحضيض الادنی الی الاوج الاعلی ووفد عليك
بانجذاب واشتياق لا يتناهی رب اكرم مثوی
فی الجنة المأوی وتجلّ عليه بآيات القبول حتی تترنح
من تلك الصهبآء واجعل له مقعد صدق عليّاً فی جوار
رحمتك الكبری وارفعه مقاماً سامياً فی الرفارف الاعلی
واجعله يتخذ وكراً فی اعلی فروع سدرة المنتهی

ويترنم كالطيور الصادحة فی الجواء وادخله فی حديقة
اللقآء وتجلّ عليه بالفيوضات الی ابد الآباد انك انت
الكريم انك انت الرحيم انك انت العفو الغفور اللطيف
ثم افرغ الصبر يا الهی علی بقيته الصالحة وذرّيته الطيبة
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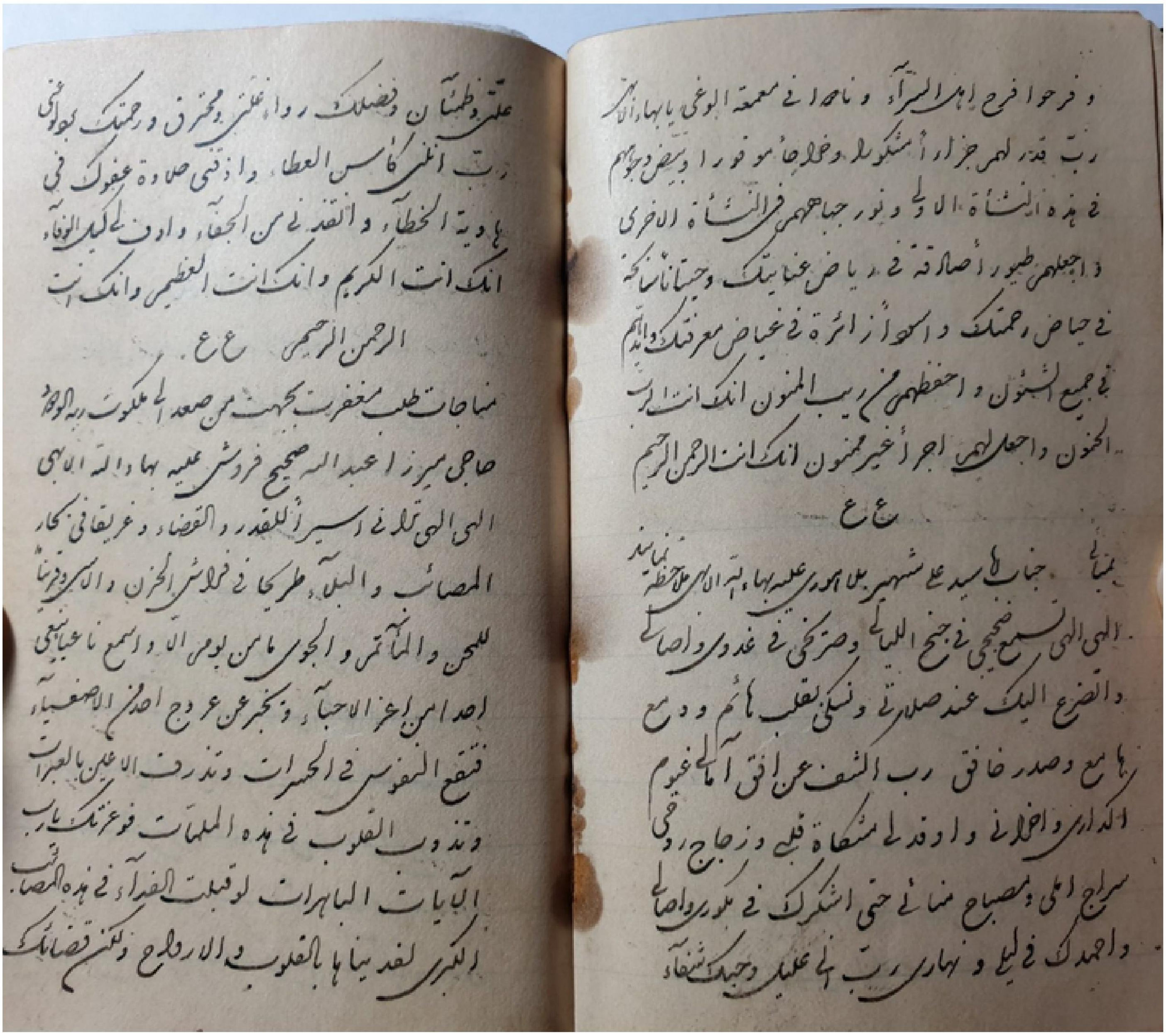
افقه واشجار حديقة العليا انك انت المؤيد الكريم
العزيز الوهاب ع ع

هو الله ای ثابت بر پيمان نامه شما رسيد مضمون
دليل ثبوت و رسوخ بر بنيان عظيم بود فی الحقيقة قائم
بر خدمتی جز نشر نفحات الله و اعلاء كلمة الله مقصدی
نداری اگر جميع ياران بر خدمت مرغوب آستان
مقدس بر بندند در اندك مدتی نسيم معطر جنت
ابهی مشام اكثر اهل ايران را معطر نمايد اليوم



و فرحوا فرح اهل السرآء و ناحوا فی معمعة الوغی یا بهاء الابهی
رب قدر لهم جزاءً مشکوراً و خلاجاً موفوراً و بیض وجوههم
فی هذه النشأة الاولی و نور جباههم فی النشأة الاخری
و اجعلهم طیوراً صادقة فی ریاض عنایتک و حیتاناً سابحة
فی حیاض رحمتک و اسوداً زائرة فی غیاض معرفتک و ایدهم
فی جمیع الشئون و احفظهم من ریب المنون انک انت الرب
الحنون و اجعل لهم اجراً غیر ممنون انک انت الرحمن الرحیم

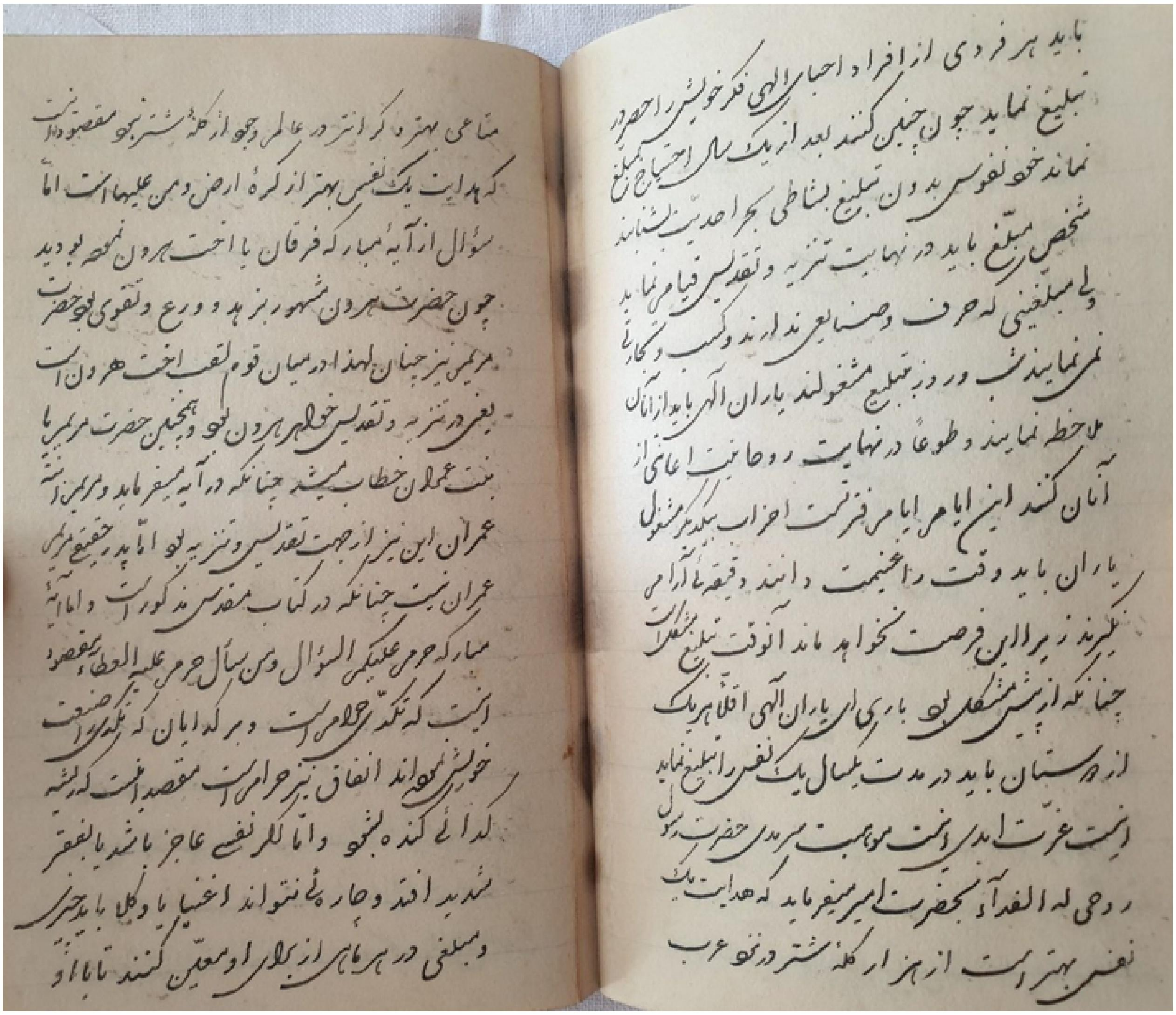
ع ع

مناجات جناب آ سید علی شهیر بملا هادی علیه بهاء الله الابهی ملاحظه نمایند
الهی الهی تسمع ضجیجی فی جنح اللیالی و صریخی فی غدوی و اصالی
و التضرع الیک عند صلاتی و تشکی بقلب هائم و دمع
هامع و صدر خافق رب اکشف عن افق آمالی غیوم
الکدار و اخلالی و اوقد لی مشکاة قلبی و زجاج روحی
سراج املی و مصباح منائی حتی اشکرک فی بکوری و اصالی
و احمدک فی لیلی و نهاری رب انی علیک و حبک شفاء

علیلی و طمئنان و فضلک رواء غلتی و محترق و رحمتک بلوائحی
رب اذقنی کأس العطاء و اذقنی حلاوة عفوک فی
هاویة الخطاء و انقذنی من الجفاء و اوف لی کیل الوفاء
انک انت الکریم و انک انت العظیم و انک انت
الرحمن الرحیم ع ع

مناجات طلب مغفرت بجهت من صعد الی ملکوت ربه الودود
حاجی میرزا عبدالله صحیح فروش علیه بهاء الله الابهی
الهی الهی ترانی اسیراً للقدر و القضاء و غریقاً فی بحار
المصائب و البلاء طریحاً فی فراش الحزن و الاسی و قریناً
للمحن و المآتم و الجوی ما من یوم الا و اسمع ناعیاً ینعی
احداً من اعزاء الاحباء و یخبر عن عروج احد من الاصفیاء
فتقع النفوس فی الحسرات و تذرف الاعین بالعبرات
و تذوب القلوب فی هذه الملمات فوعزتک یا رب
الآیات الباهرات لو قبلت الفداء فی هذه المصائب
الکبری لفدیناها بالقلوب و الارواح و لکن قضائک

3



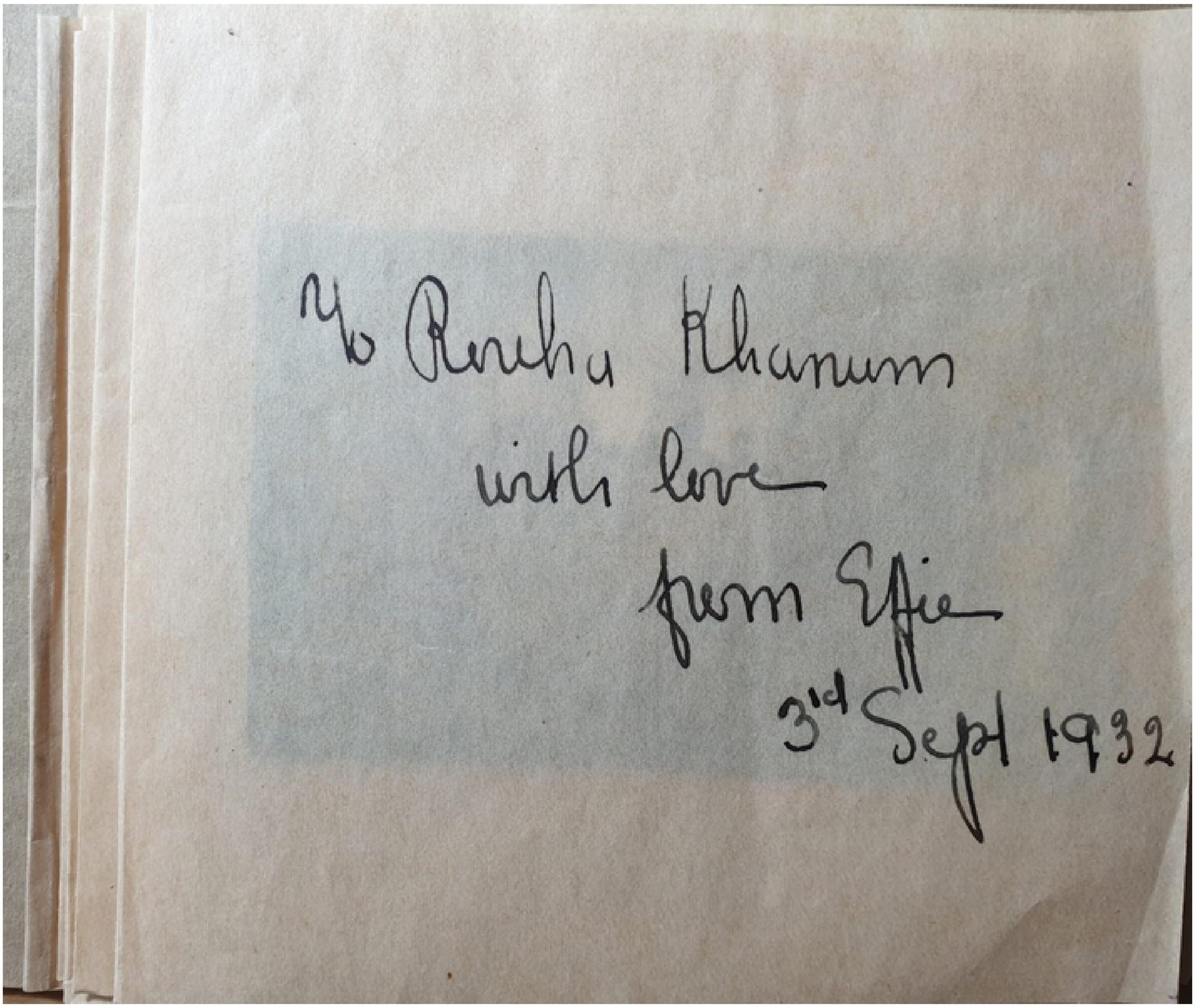
باید هر فردی از افراد احبای الهی فکر خویش را حصر در
تبلیغ نماید چون چنین کنند بعد از یک سال احتیاج بمبلغ
نماند خود نفوس بدون تبلیغ بشاطی بحر احدیت کشانند
شخص مبلّغ باید در نهایت تنزیه و تقدیس قیام نماید
ولی مبلّغینی که حرف و صنایعی ندارند و کسب و تجارت
نمی‌نمایند و در تبلیغ مشغولند یاران الهی باید از آنان
ملاحظه نمایند و طوعاً در نهایت روحانیت اعانتی از
آنان کنند این ایام ایام فرصت است احزاب دیگر مشغول
یاران باید وقت را غنیمت دانند دقیقه‌ئی آرام
نگیرند زیرا این فرصت نخواهد ماند آنوقت تبلیغ مشکل است
چنانکه از پیش مشکل بود باری ای یاران الهی اقلاً هر یک
از دوستان باید در مدت یکسال یک نفس را تبلیغ نماید
این است عزت ابدی این است موهبت سرمدی حضرت رسول
روحی له الفداء بحضرت امیر میفرماید که هدایت یک
نفس بهتر است از هزار گله شتر در نوع عرب

متاعی بهتر و گرانتر در عالم وجود از گلهٔ شتر نبود مقصود این است
که هدایت یک نفس بهتر از کرهٔ ارض و من علیها است اما
سؤال از آیهٔ مبارکه فرقان یا اخت هرون نموده بودید
چون حضرت هرون مشهور بزهد و ورع و تقوی بود حضرت
مریم نیز چنان لهذا در میان قوم لقب اخت هرون است
یعنی در تنزیه و تقدیس خواهر هرون بود و همچنین حضرت مریم را
بنت عمران خطاب میشد چنانکه در آیه میفرماید و مریم ابنة
عمران این نیز از جهت تقدیس و تنزیه بود اما پدر حقیقی مریم
عمران نیست چنانکه در کتاب مقدس مذکور است و اما آیهٔ
مبارکه حرّم علیکم السؤال و من سأل حرم علیه العطاء مقصود
این است که تکدّی حرام است و بر گدایان که تکدّی را صنعت
خویش نموده‌اند انفاق نیز حرام است مقصد این است که ریشه
گدائی کنده شود و اما اگر نفسی عاجز باشد یا بفقر
شدید افتد و چاره‌ئی نتواند اغنیا یا وکلا باید چیزی
و مبلغی در هر ماهی از برای او معین کنند تا با او

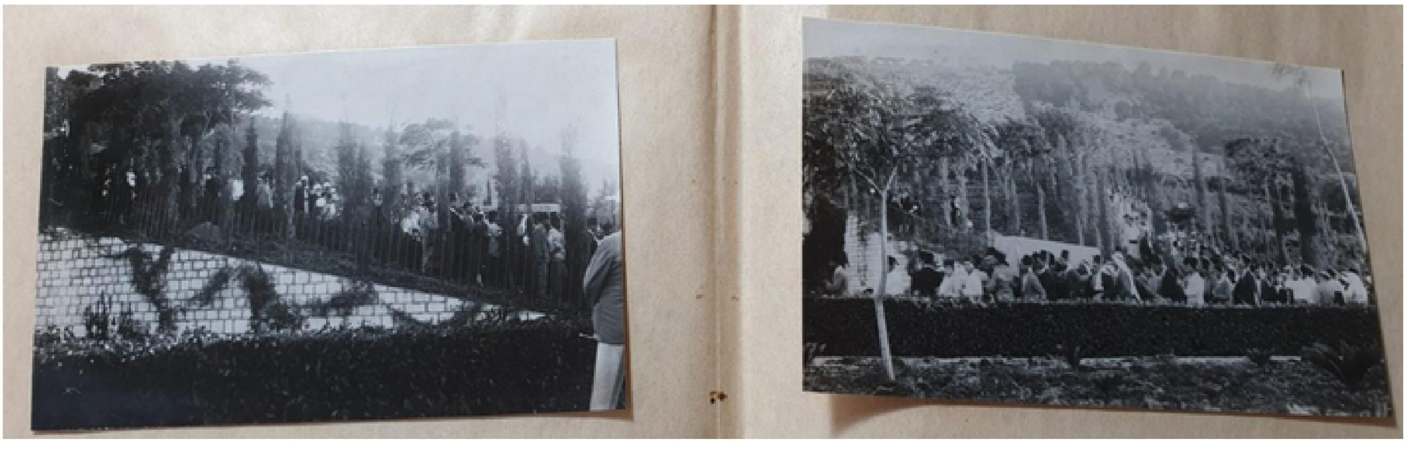
6

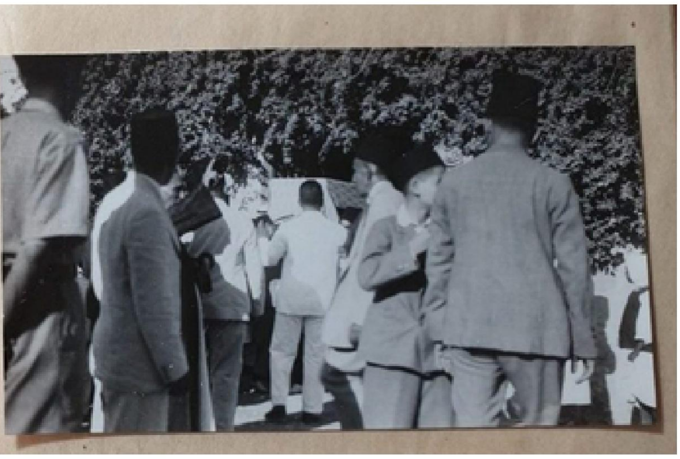
Funeral of Bahhiyeh Khanum , Greatest Holy Leaf

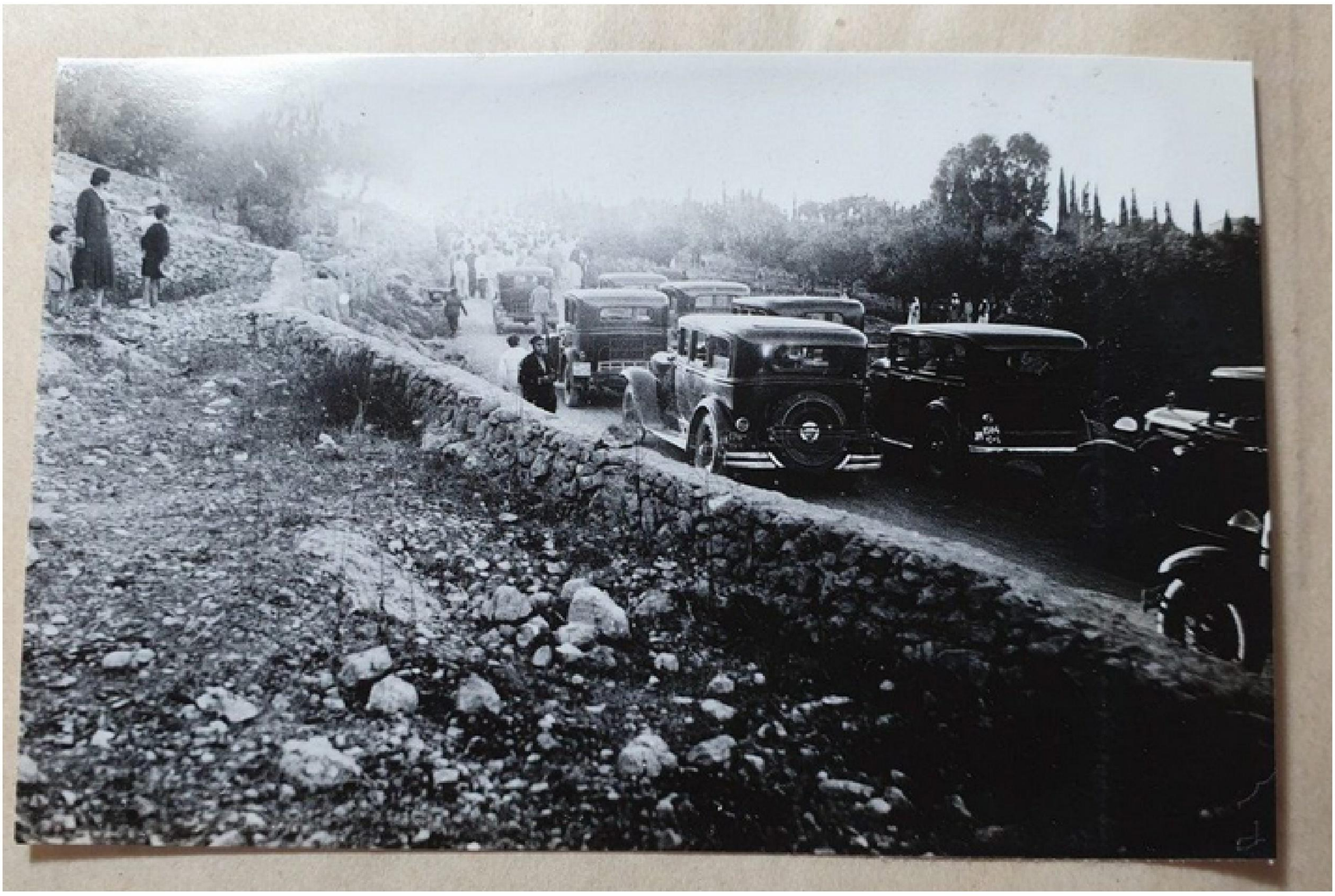
Photos and album by Effie Baker



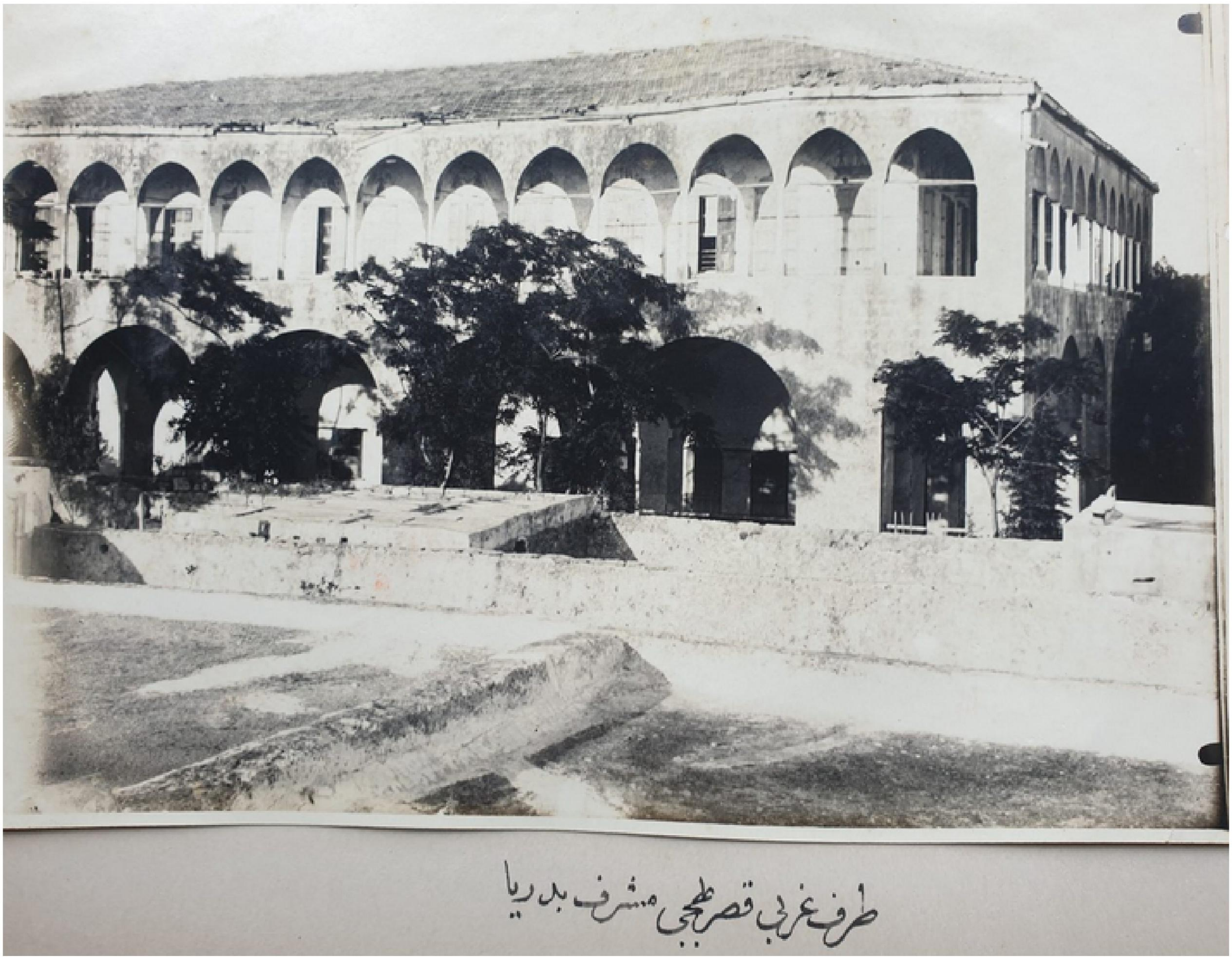
To Rouha Khanum
with love
from Effie
3rd Sept 1932



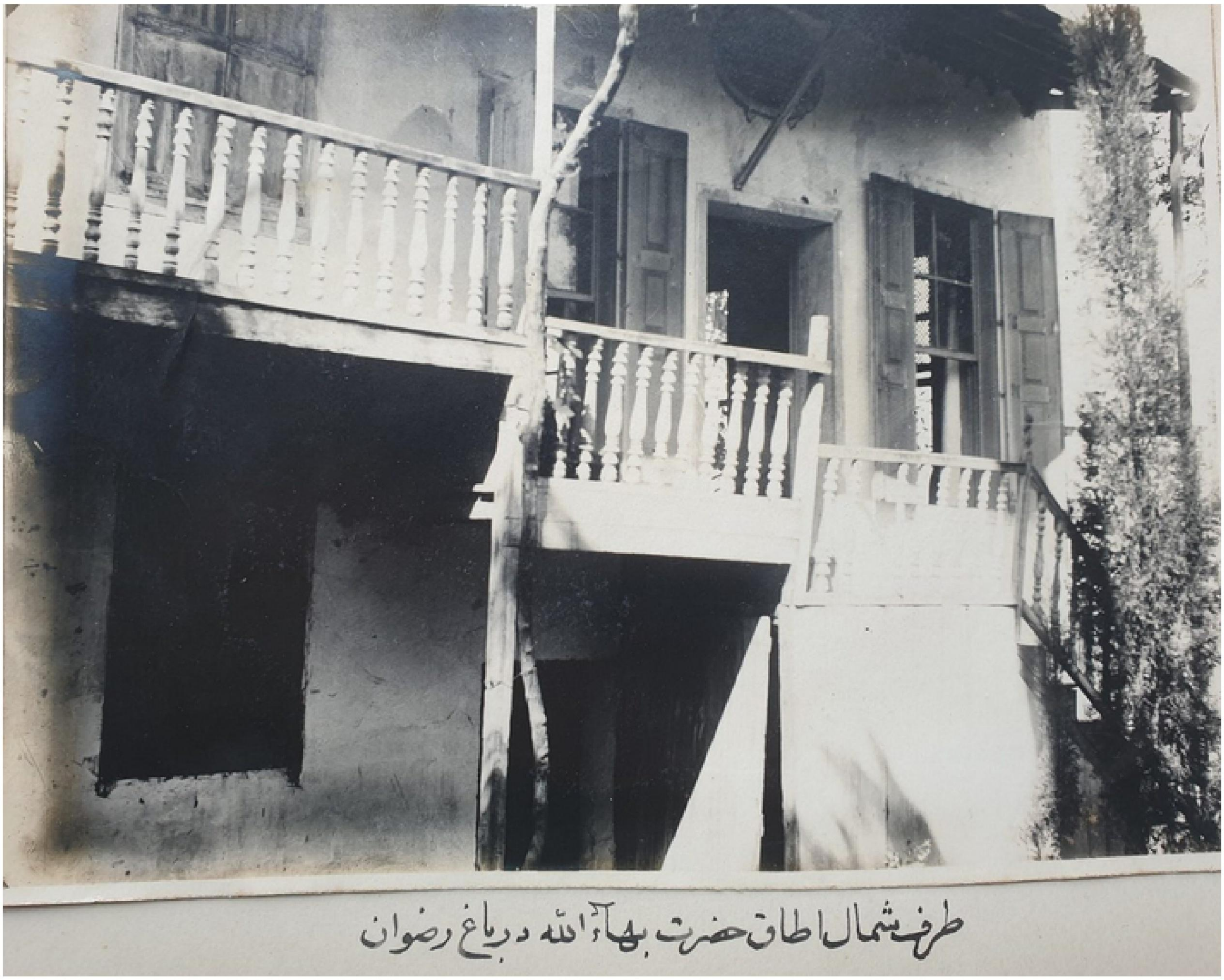




Pictures from an album by Hussein Kahreba’i in 1924-25


طرف غربی قصر بهجی مشرف بدریا

The Qasr of Bahji outside Acre


طرف شمال اطاق حضرت بهاء الله در باغ رضوان

North side of Baha'u'llah's room in the Garden of Ridvan, outside Acre

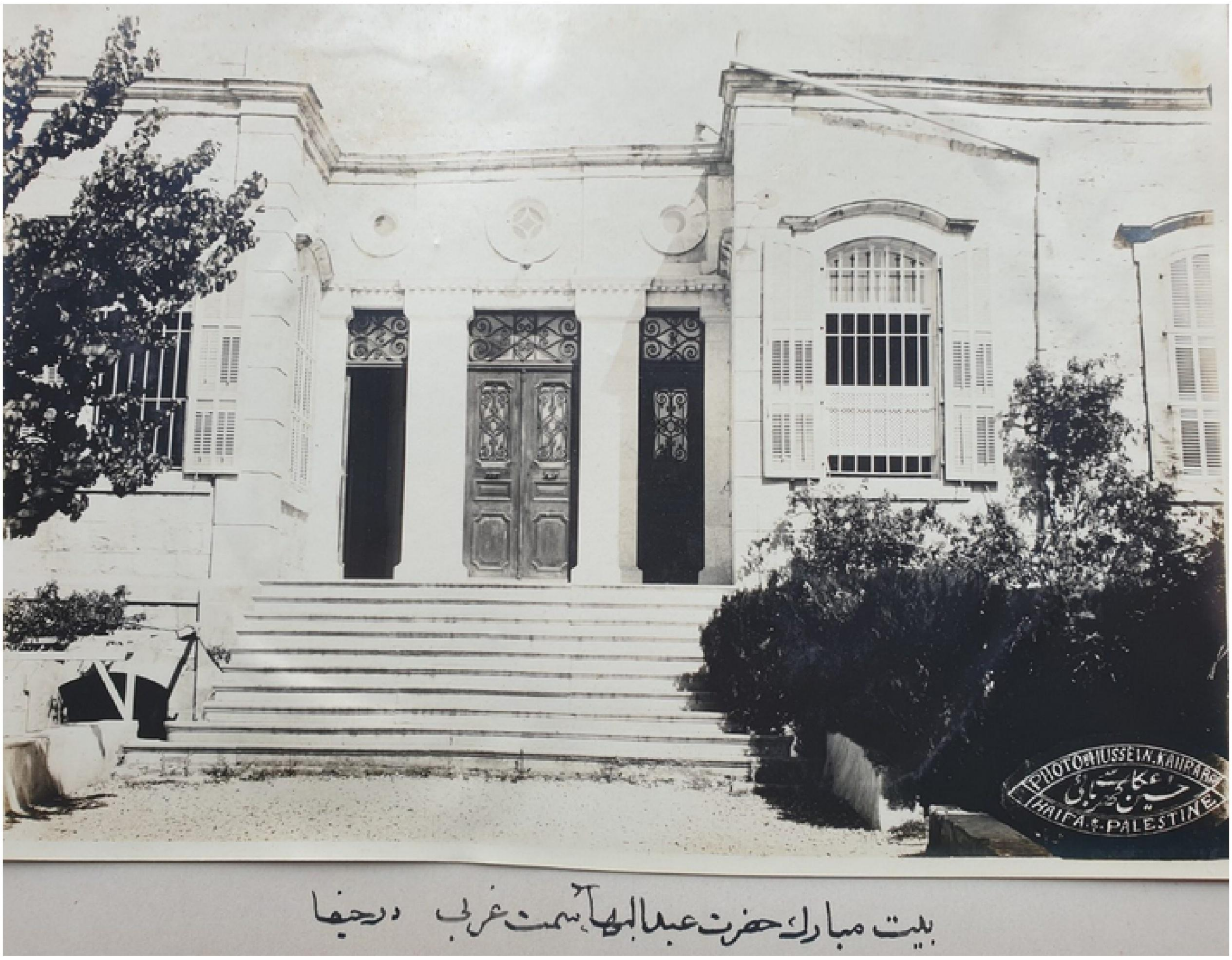


PHOTO HUSSEIN KAHRABA
عکاس حسین کهربائی
HAIFA - PALESTINE
بیت مبارک حضرت عبدالبها سمت غربی درحیفا

Abdu'l Baha's house in Haifa

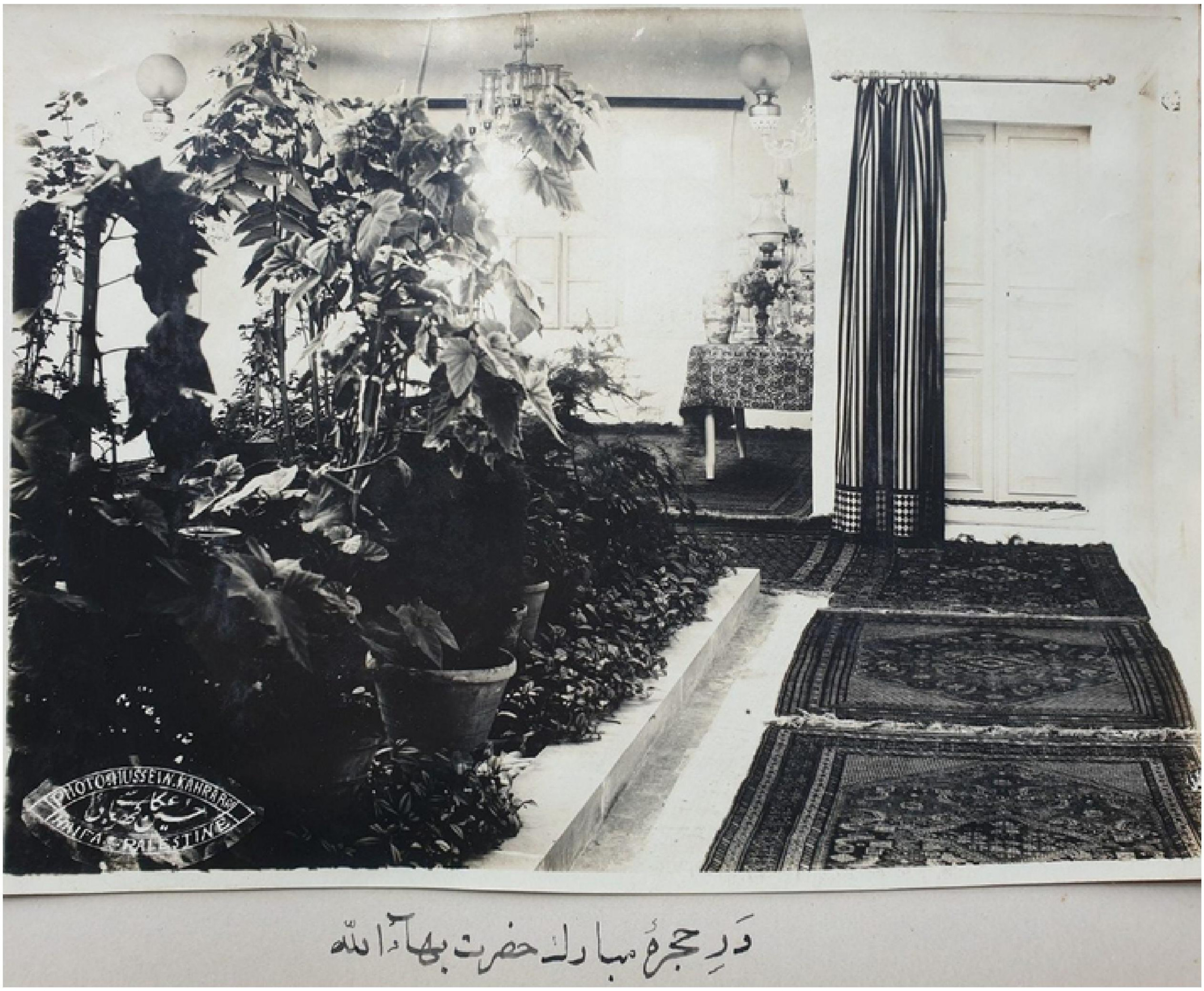


PHOTO HUSSEIN KAHRABA
HAIFA PALESTINE

درِ حجرهٔ مبارک حضرت بهاءالله

Door of the room where Baha’u’llah was laid to rest

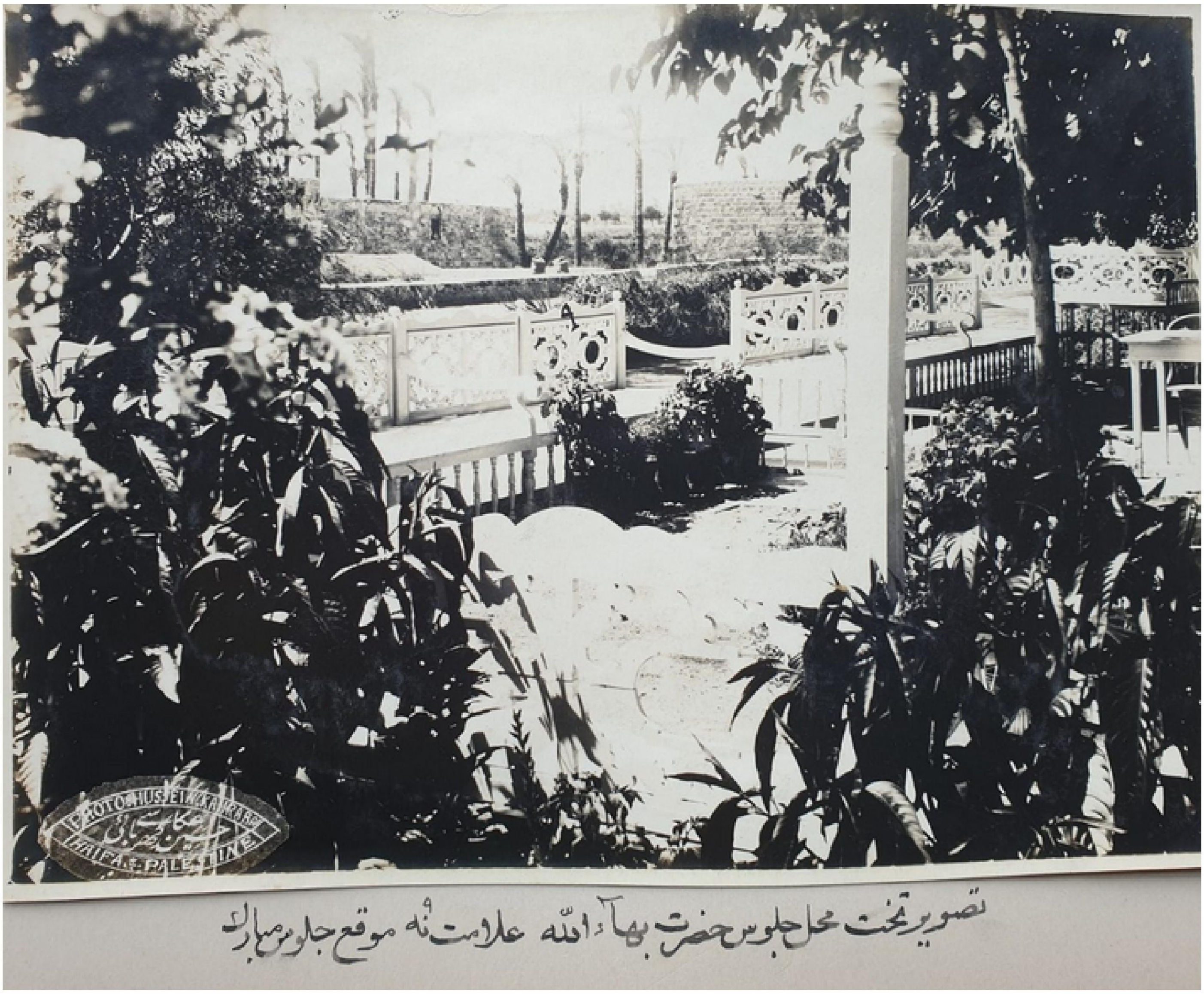


PHOTO. HUSSEIN
HAIFA - PALESTINE

تصویر تخت محل جلوس حضرت بهاءالله علامت ۹ نه موقع جلوس مبارک

Baha'u' llah's seat (marked by figure 9) in the Garden of Ridvan

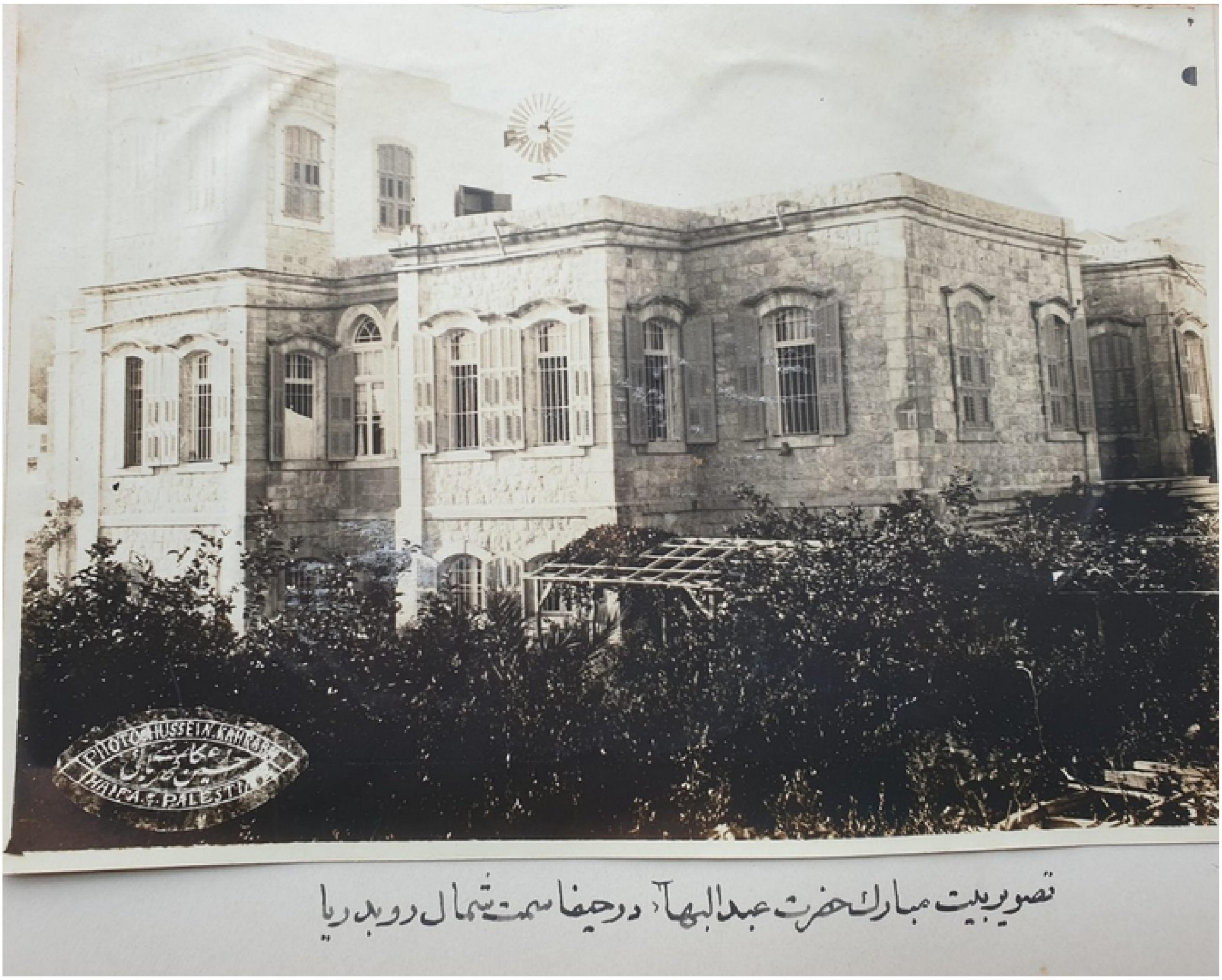
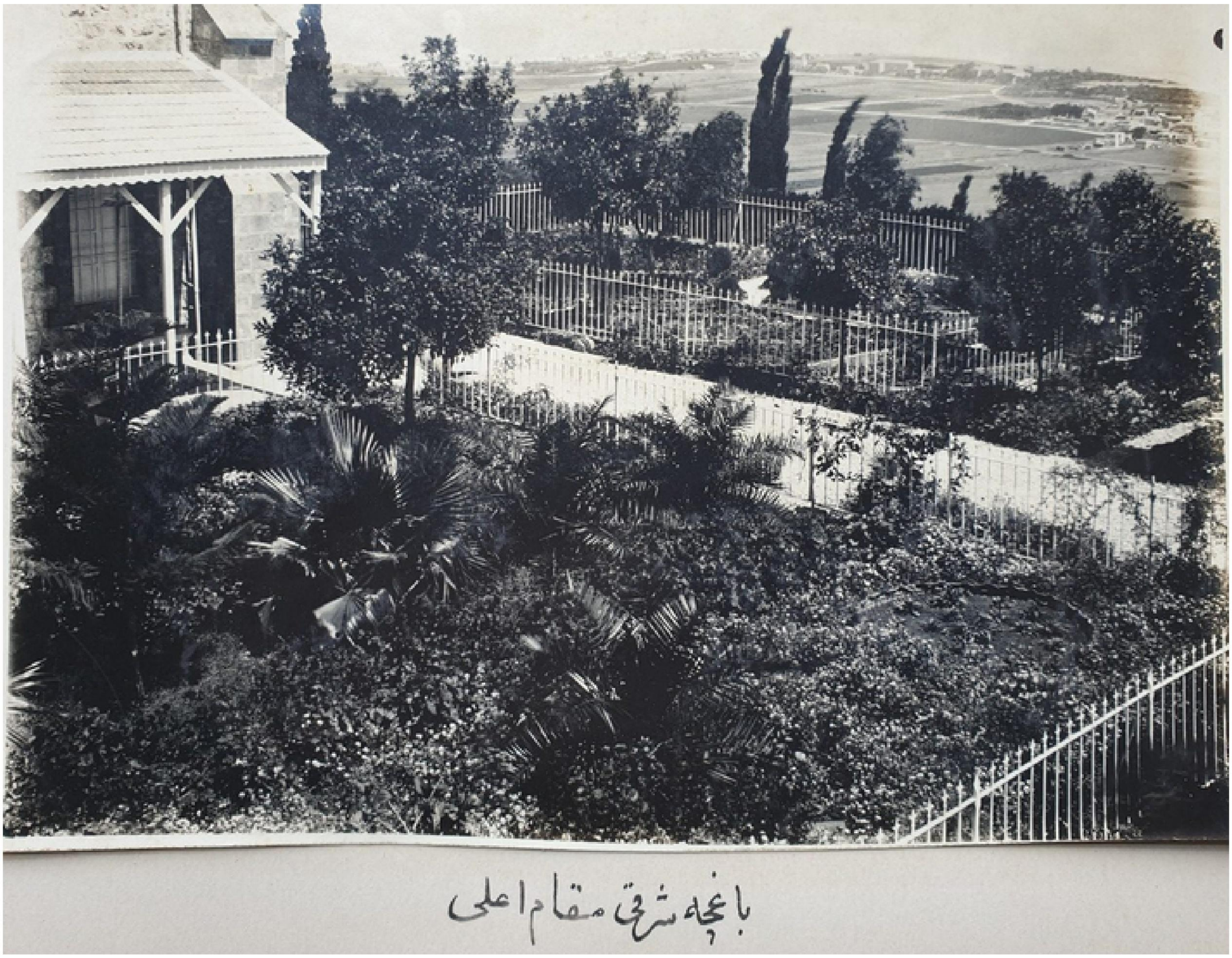


PHOTO HUSSEIN KAHRABA
عکاسی حسین کهربا
HAIFA PALESTINE
تصویر بیت مبارک حضرت عبدالبهآ در حیفا سمت شمال رو بدریا

Abdu'Baha's home in Haifa


باغچه شرقی مقام اعلی

The Eastern Garden at the Shrine of the Bab in Haifa

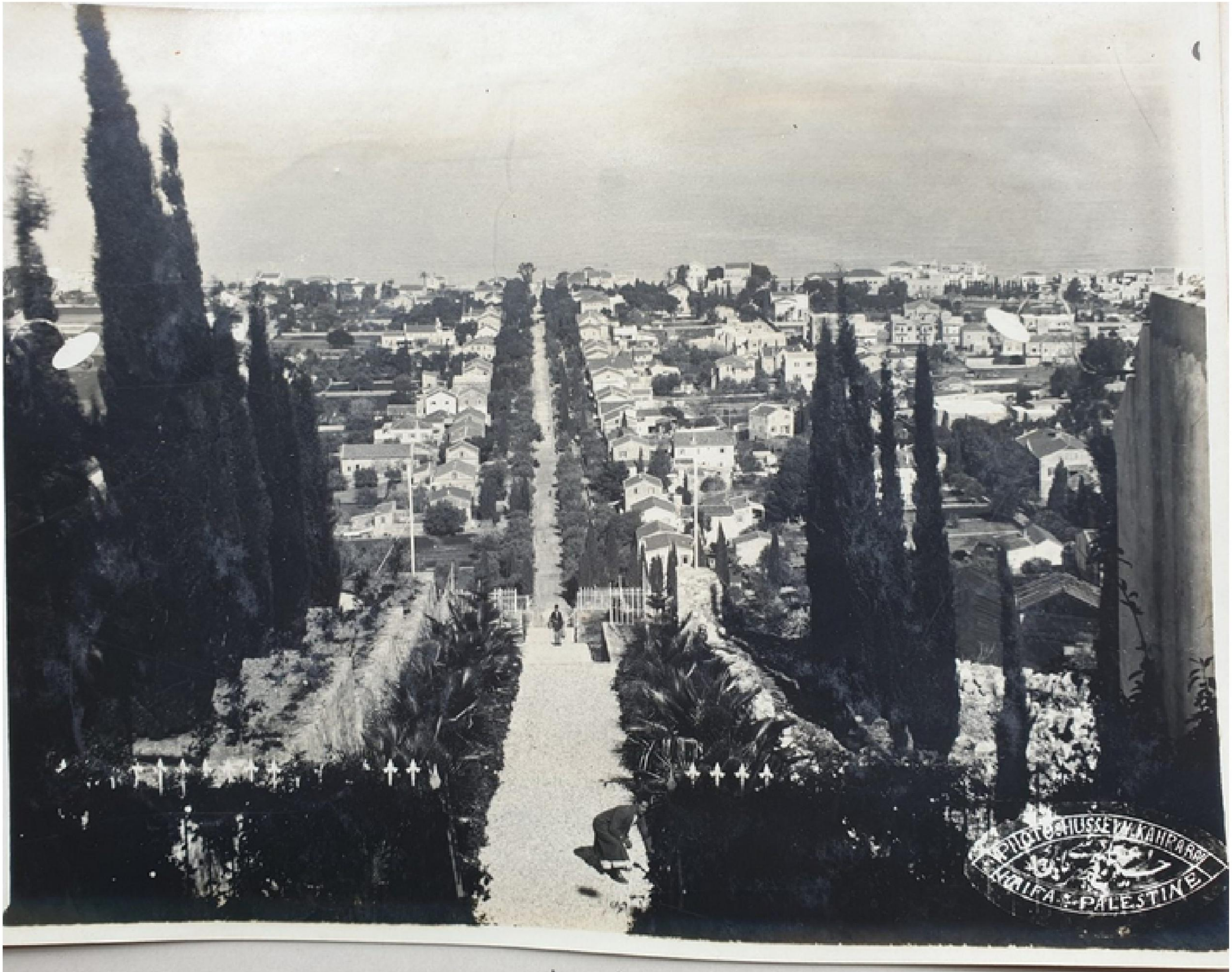
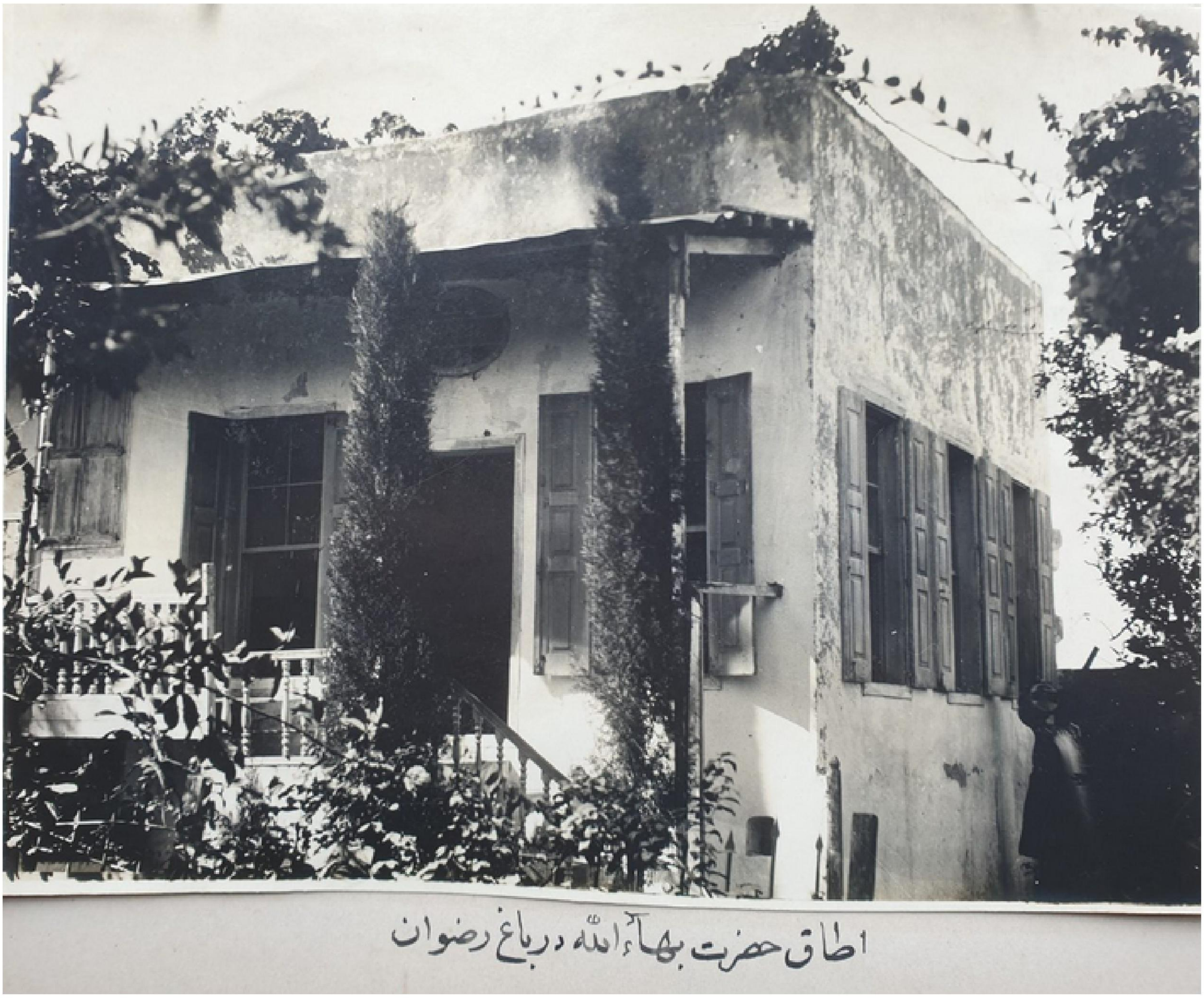


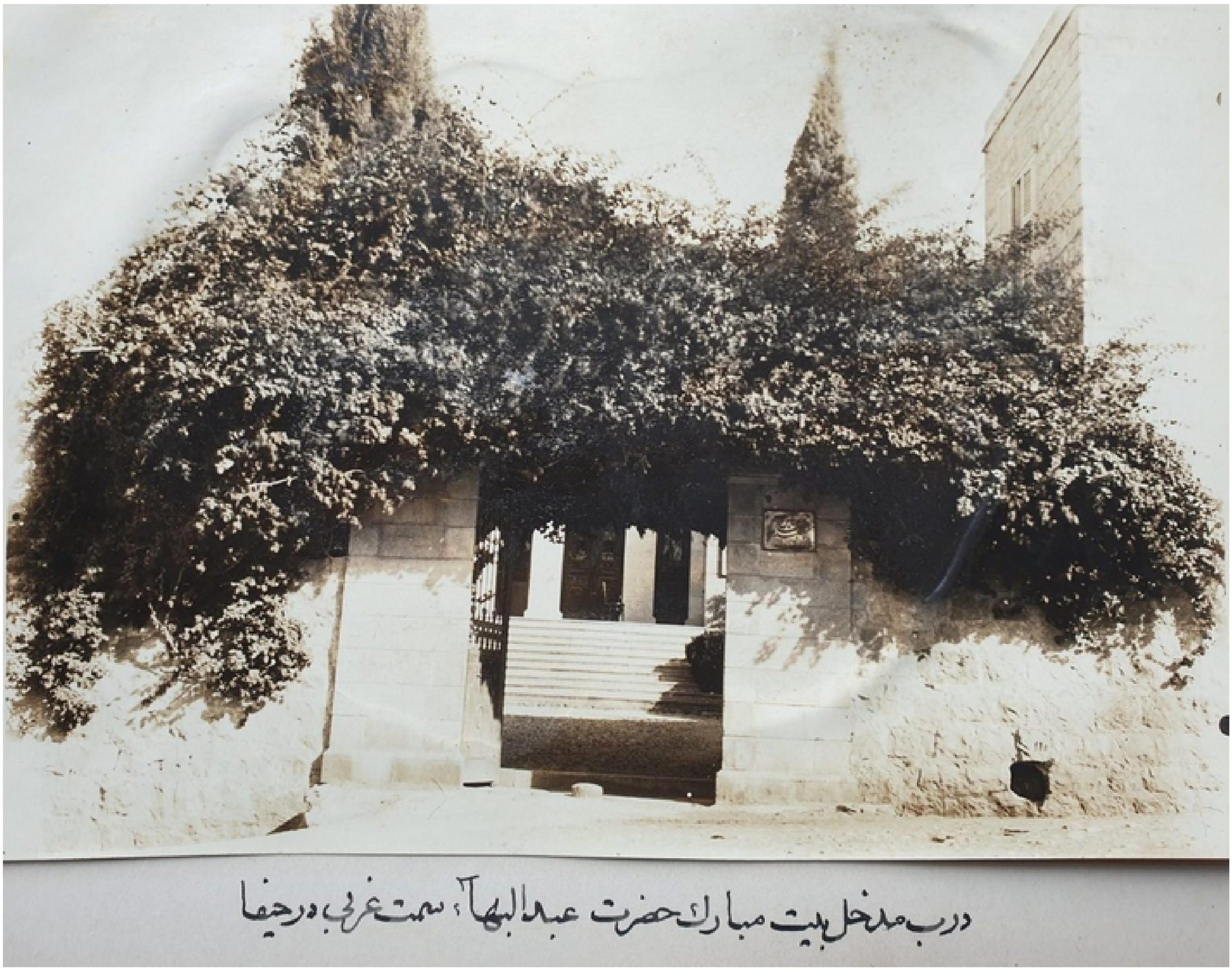
PHOTO HUSSEYN KAHRABA
HAIFA - PALESTINE

سه طبقه راه مقابل مقام اعلی

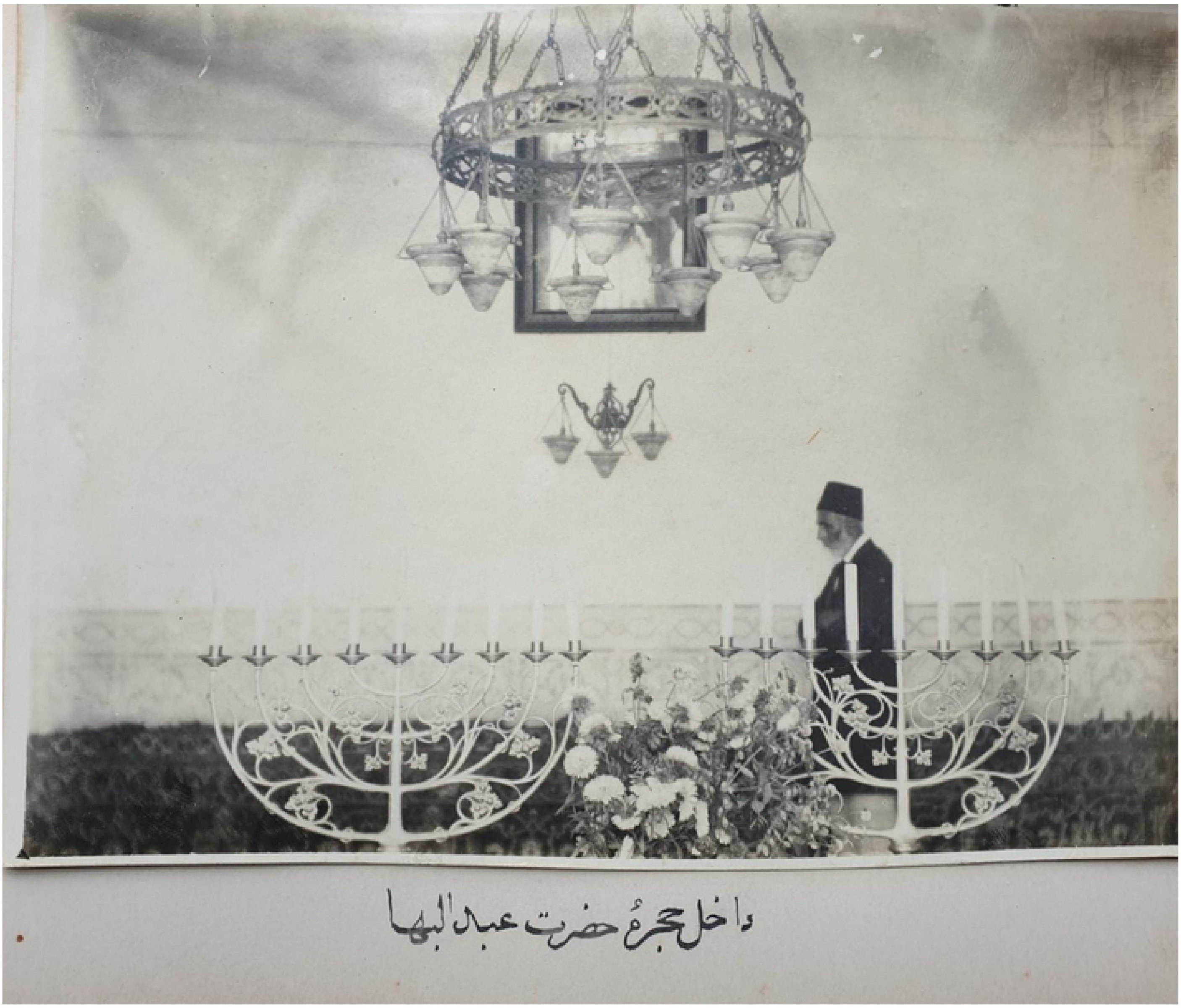
Looking down from Shrine of the Bab and Abdu'l Baha towards the sea, Haifa


اطاق حضرت بهآءالله درباغ رضوان

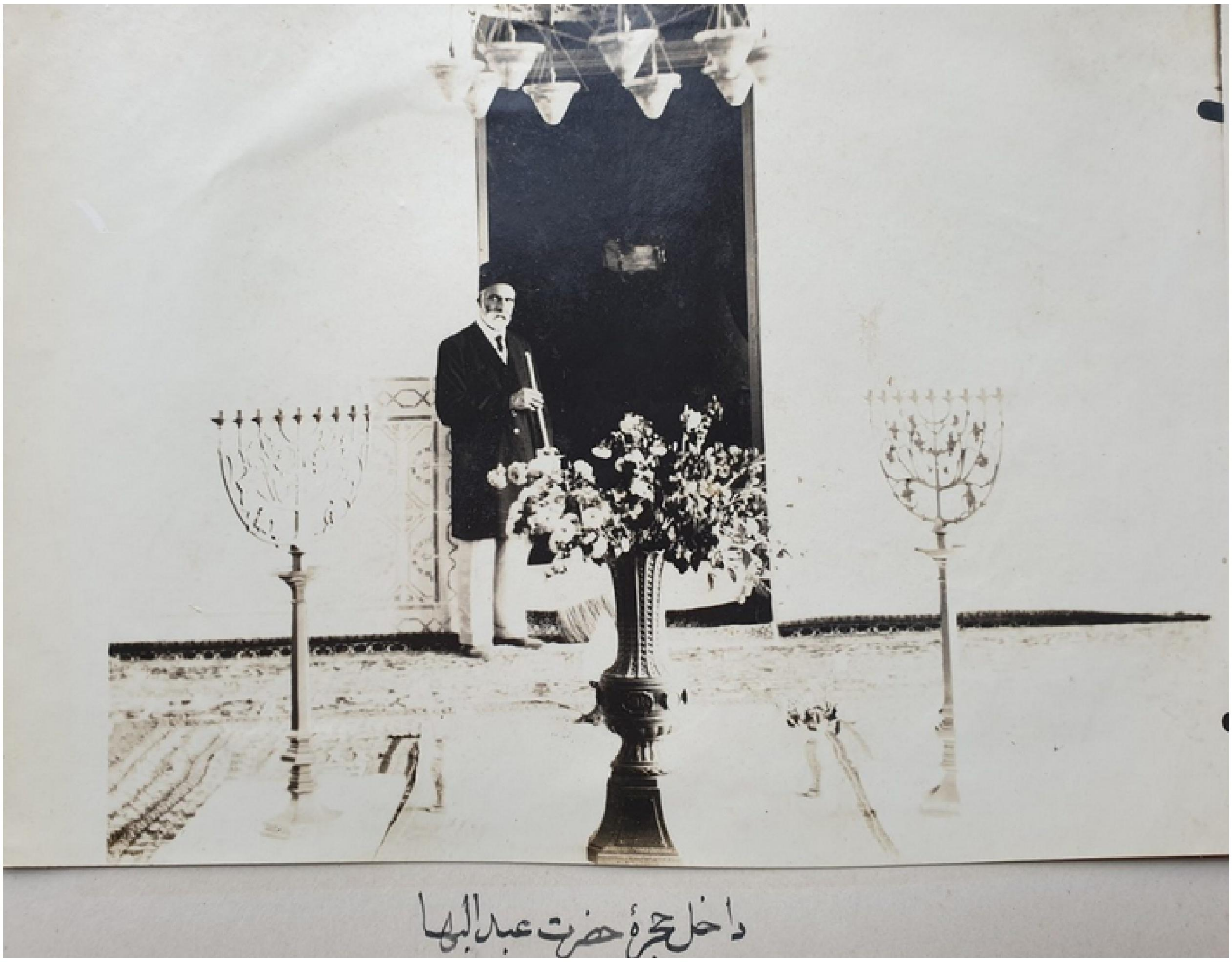
Baha'u'llah's Room , Garden of Ridvan, outside Acre


درب مدخل بیت مبارک حضرت عبدالبهاء سمت غربی در حیفا

Entrance to Abdu'l Baha's home in Haifa

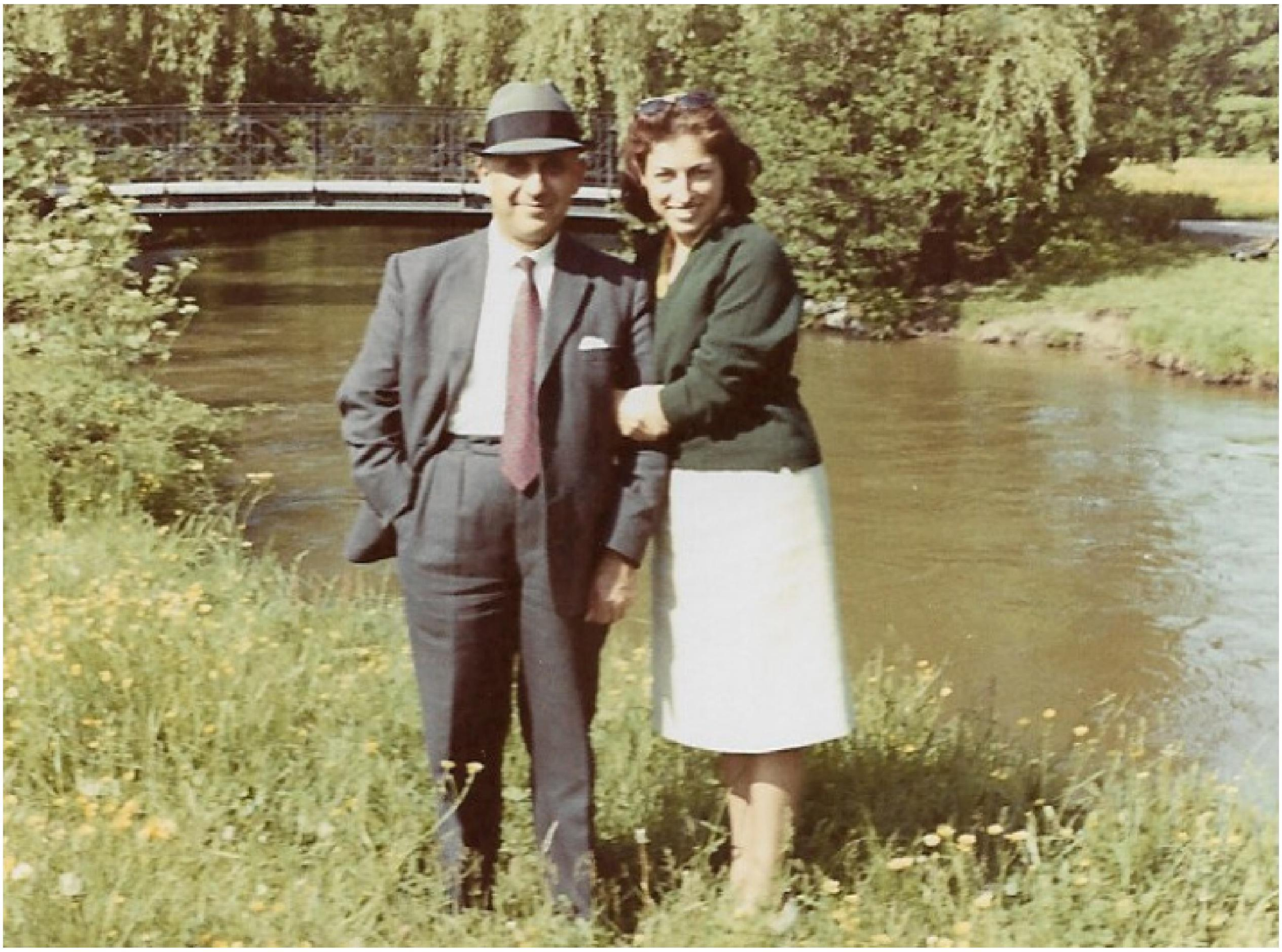

داخل حجرهٔ حضرت عبدالبها

Inside the room where Abdu'l Baha was laid to rest. (picture of Abbas Gholi , caretaker of the Shrine)


داخل حجرهٔ حضرت عبدالبها

Inside the room where Abdu'l Baha was laid to rest with Abbas Gholi (caretaker of the Shrine) standing by the door

More Photos



Hossein Rabbani and Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid, brother and niece of Shoghi Effendi 1964

Rouhanguise Rabbani Afnan and Hossein Afnan,
Sister and brother of Shoghi Effendi
1982

Maliheh Afnan, Shoghi Effendi's niece, 1989

Zahra Shahid Afnan, daughter of Rouha Khanum , wife of Ruhi Afnan

Ruhi Afnan and Zahra Shahid Afnan

Maliheh Afnan and Jamileh, long-serving housekeeper/ nanny of the family

Hassan Jalal Shahid and his wife Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid , in front of Pilgrims House, Persian Street, Haifa, circa 2004

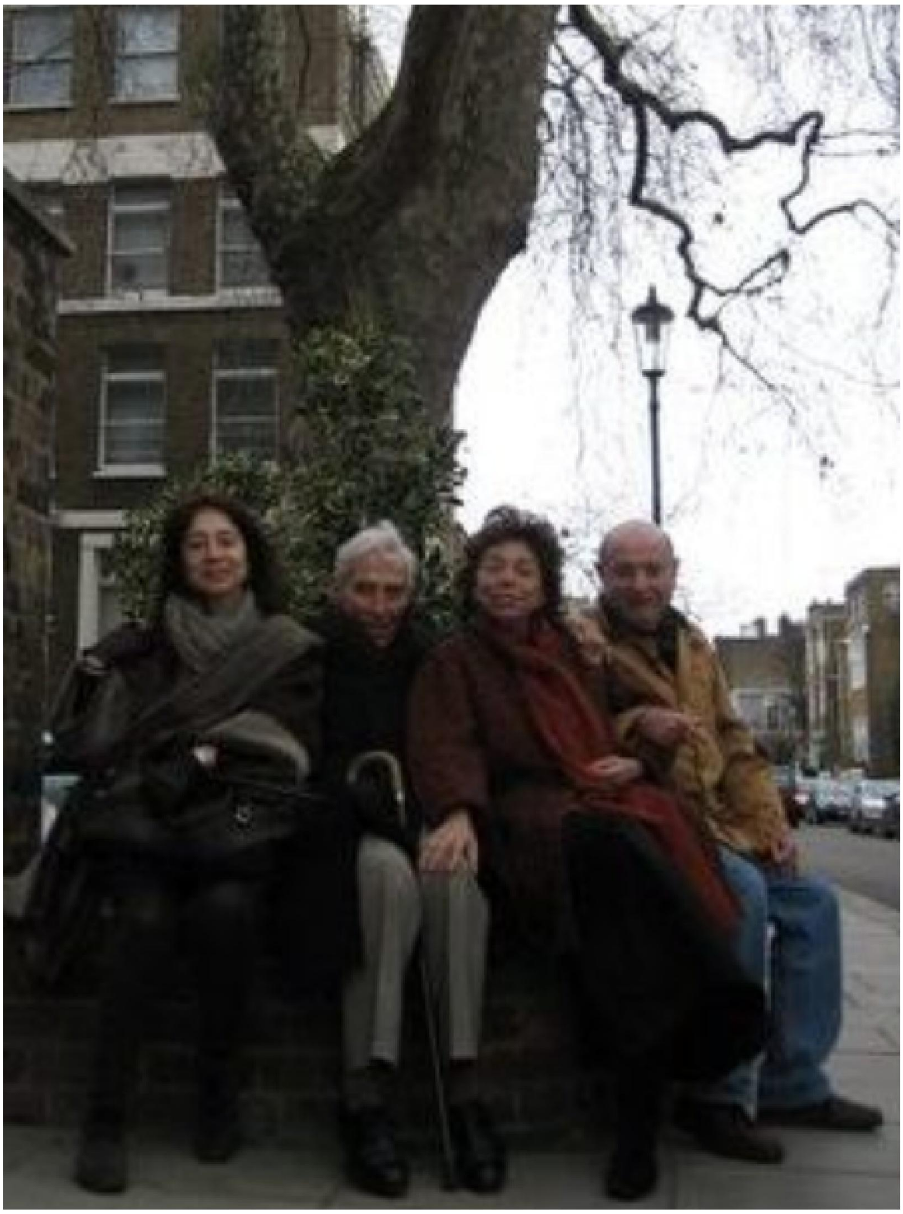
Parviz Afnan and Iraj Afnan, sons of Ruhi Mohsen Afnan and Zahra Shahid Afnan

Rouhanguise Rabbani Afnan, sister of Shoghi Effendi ,circa 1980

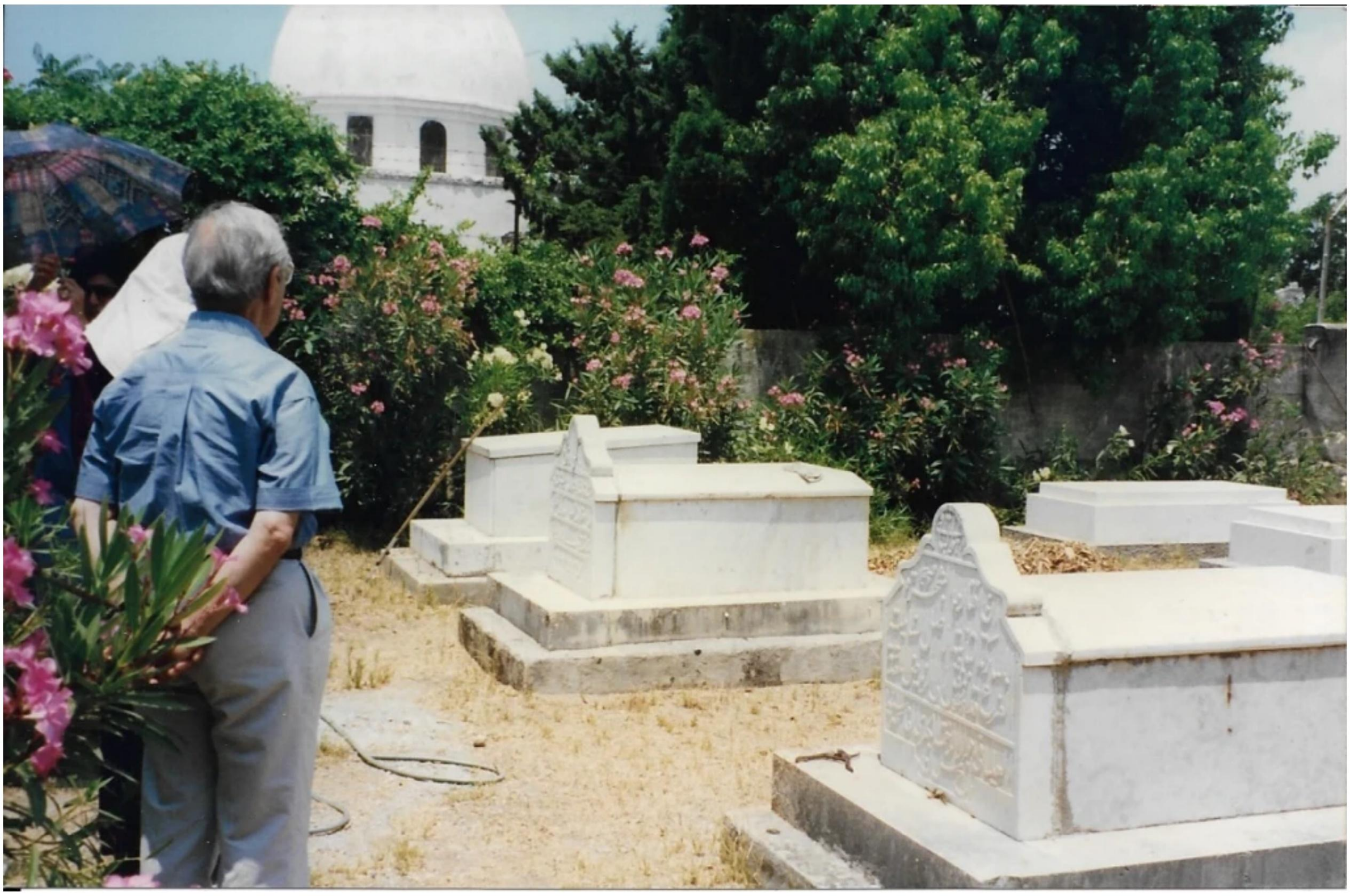
Left: Forough Afnan Hourani , daughter of Hussein Afnan and her cousin Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid, daughter of Nayyir Afnan

From L to R: Rouhanguise Rabbani Afnan, sister of Shoghi Effendi
Her eldest daughter, Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid
Jamileh, long- serving housekeeper/nanny of the family.

From L to R: Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid , niece of Shoghi Effendi, Zeina Shahid, daughter of Dr Munib Shahid and Serene Husseini Shahid ,Parviz Afnan, son of Ruhi Afnan and Zahra Shahid, Bahji near Acre



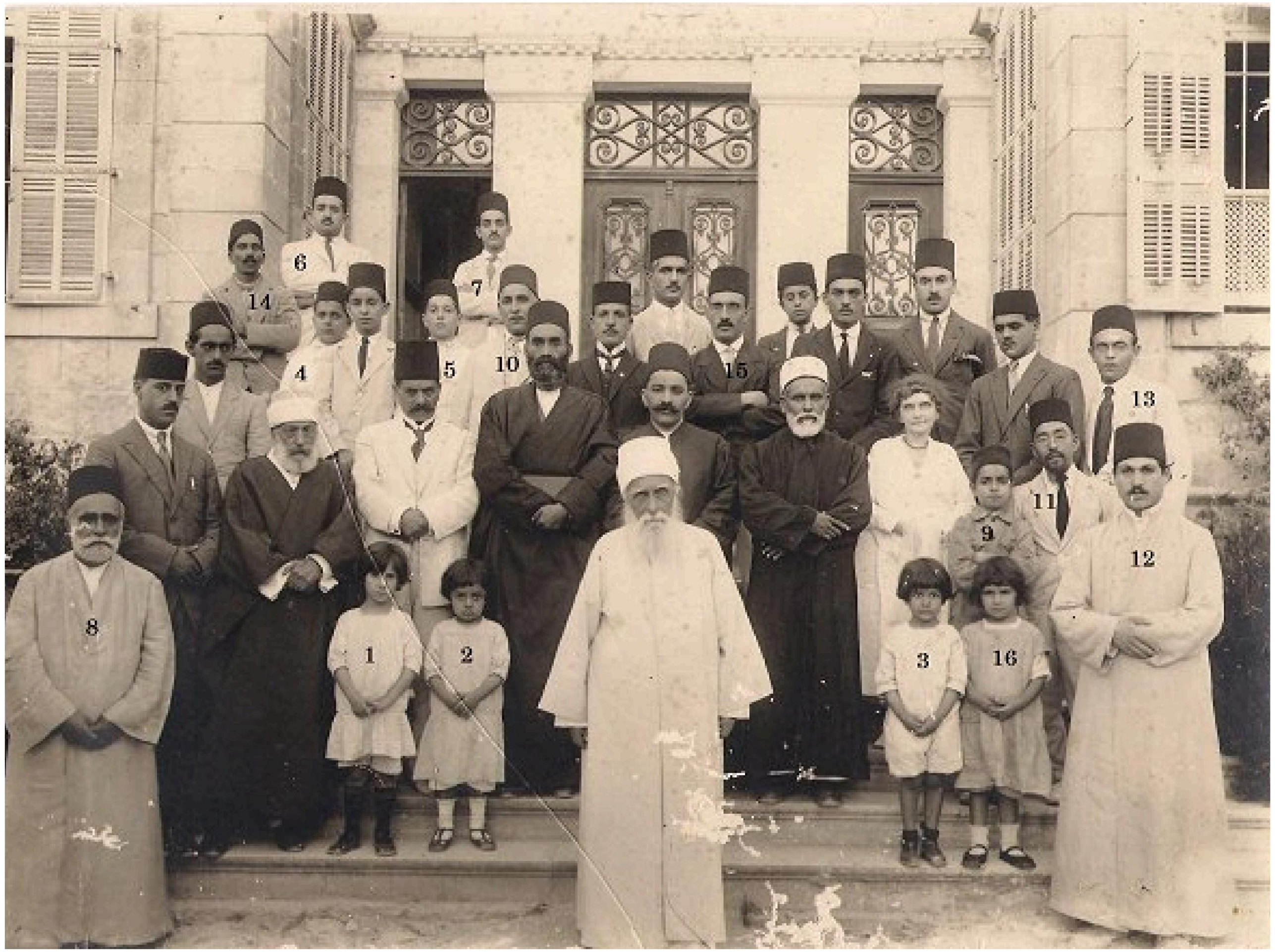
From L to R: Zeina Shahid; daughter of Dr Munib Shahid and Serene Husseini Shahid
Hassan Jalal Shahid
Leila Shahid; daughter of Dr Munib Shahid and Serene Husseini Shahid
Parviz Afnan , son of Ruhi Afnan and Zahra Shahid



ABUL ATABEH CEMETRY, Bahji outside Acre. Burial site of several members of Baha'u'llah's, Abdul Baha's and Shoghi Effendi's family, as well as other Bahai's.

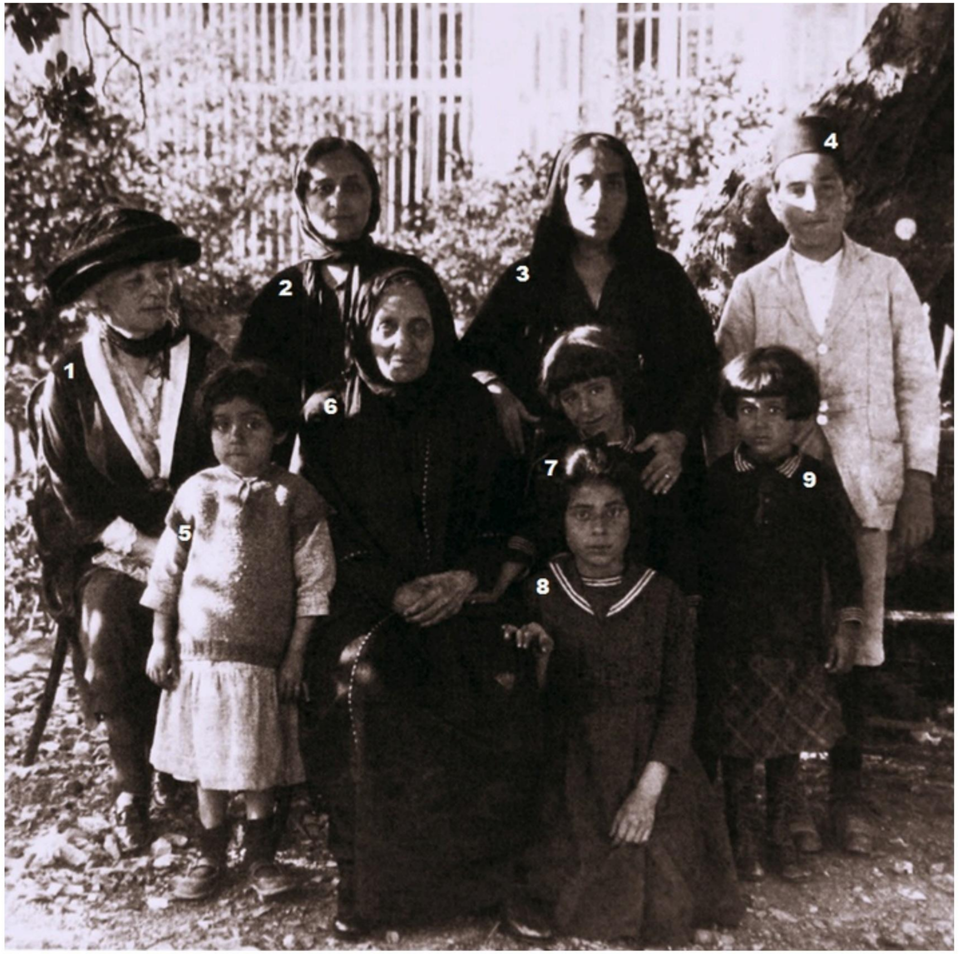
Photos

This photo was taken circa 1920 at ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s house, 7 Persian Street, Haifa:



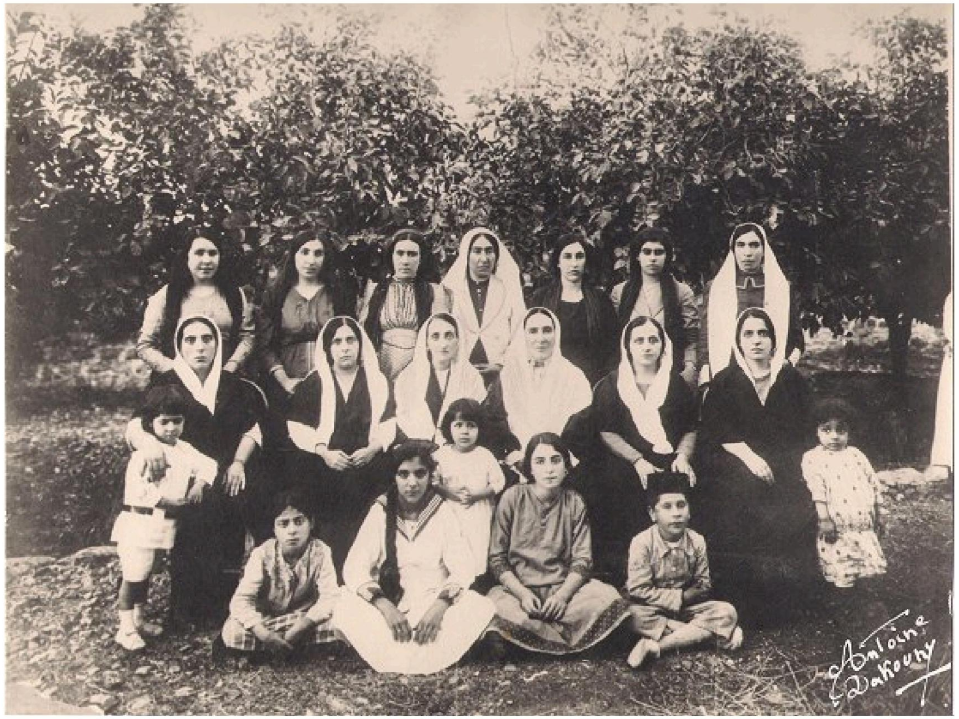
'Abdu'l-Baha with grandsons and other Baha'is, as numbered: 1. Hassan Jalal Shahid. 2. Fuad Afnan. 3. Riaz Rabbani. 4. Hussein Rabbani. 5. Munib Shahid. 6. Ruhi Afnan. 7. Soheil Afnan. 8. Agha Mirza Mohsen Shirazi Afnan. 9. Jamil Isfahani. 10. Mirza Anayatollah Isfahani. 11. Saichiro Fujita. 12. Sobhi. 13. John Esslemont. 14. Isfandiar. 15. Azizullah Khan Bahadur. 16. Nouriyeh (daughter of Leila, 'Abdu'l-Baha's housekeeper).

Picture of Greatest Holy Leaf with Lady Blomfield and some members of Abdul Baha’s family

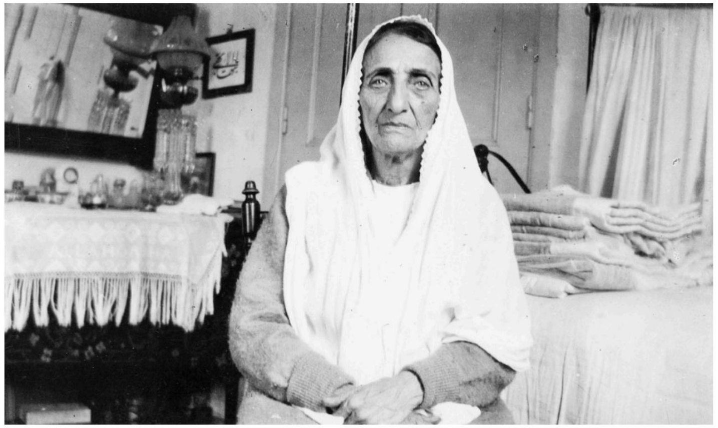


1.Lady Blomfield 2.Touba Khanum 3.Rouha Khanum 4. Munib Jalal Shahid 5. Fuad Afnan 6. Bahiyeh Khanum
7.Hassan Jalal Shahid 8.Zahra Jalal Shahid 9. Riaz Rabbani

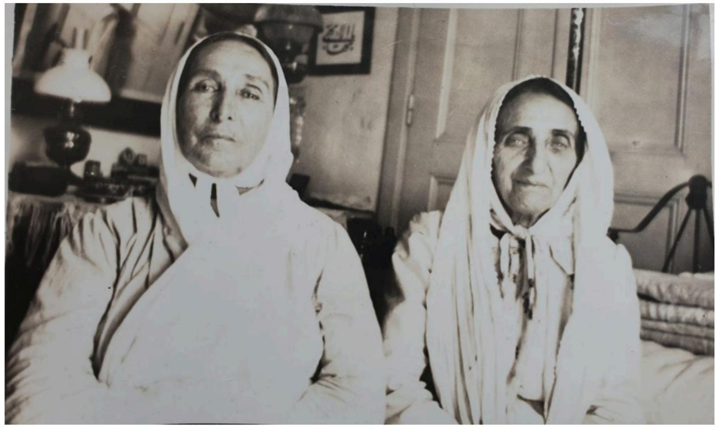
This photo was taken circa 1920 at the house of Mirza Jalal Shahid, 9 Persian Street, Haifa:



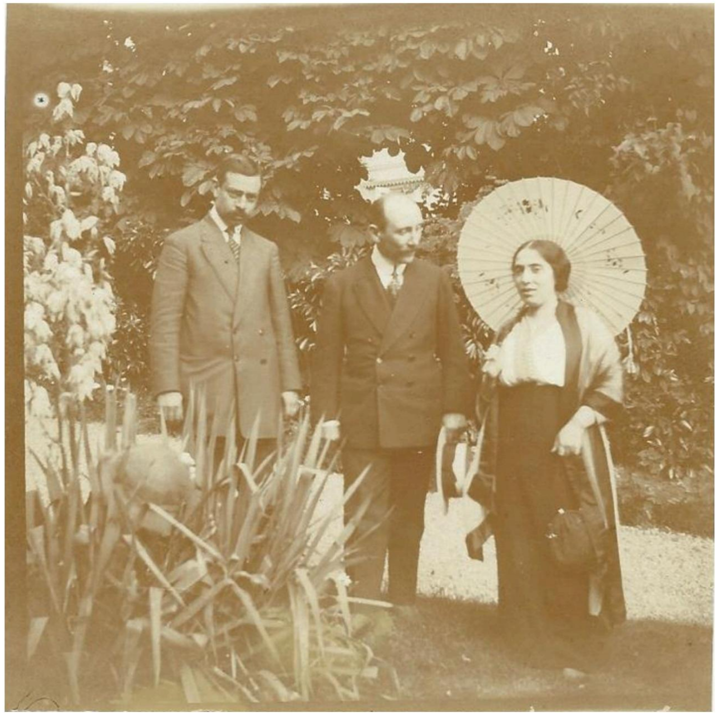
Munirih Khanum with daughters, grandchildren, and other Baha’is. FRONT ROW (L to R): Zahra Shahid, Mehranguise Rabbani, Riaz Rabbani (standing), Maryam Shahid, ? sitting boy with crossed arms. MIDDLE ROW (L to R): Hassan Jalal Shahid (standing), Rouha Khanum, Zia Khanum, Bahiyeh Khanum, Munireh Khanum, Touba Khanum, Munavar Khanum, Fuad Afnan. BACK ROW: Baha’i pilgrims from Abadeh, Iran.



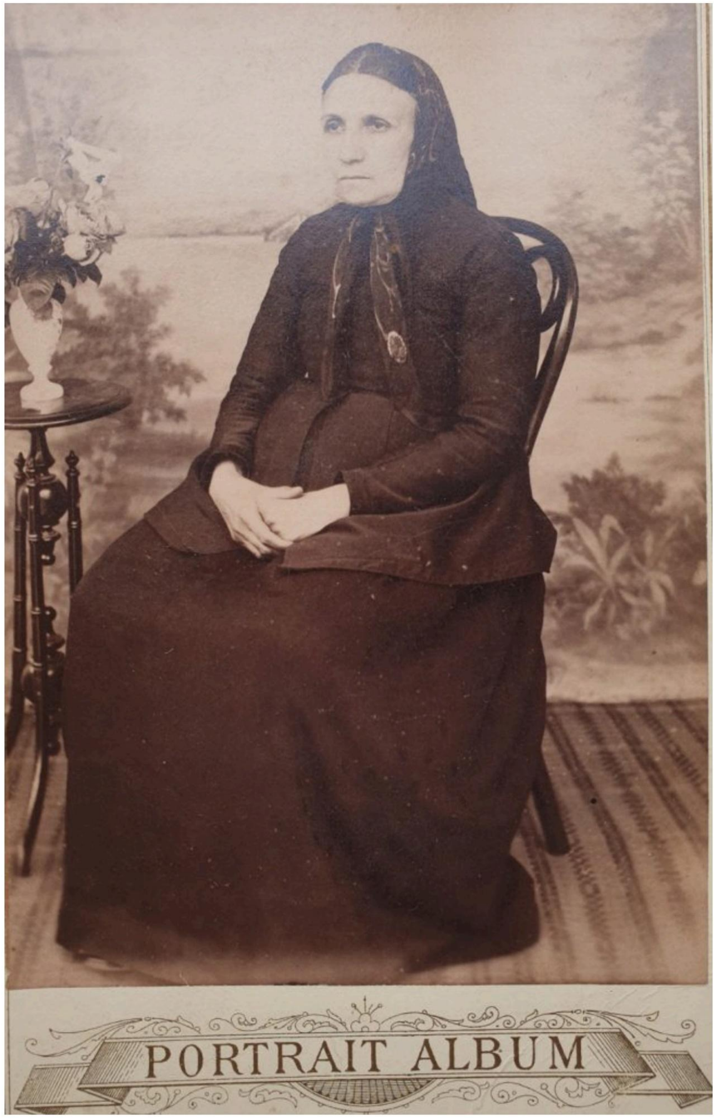
Bahiyeh Khanum – Greatest Holy Leaf



L: Munireh Khanum, wife of Abdu'l Baha
R: Bahiyeh Khanum, sister of Abdu'l Baha

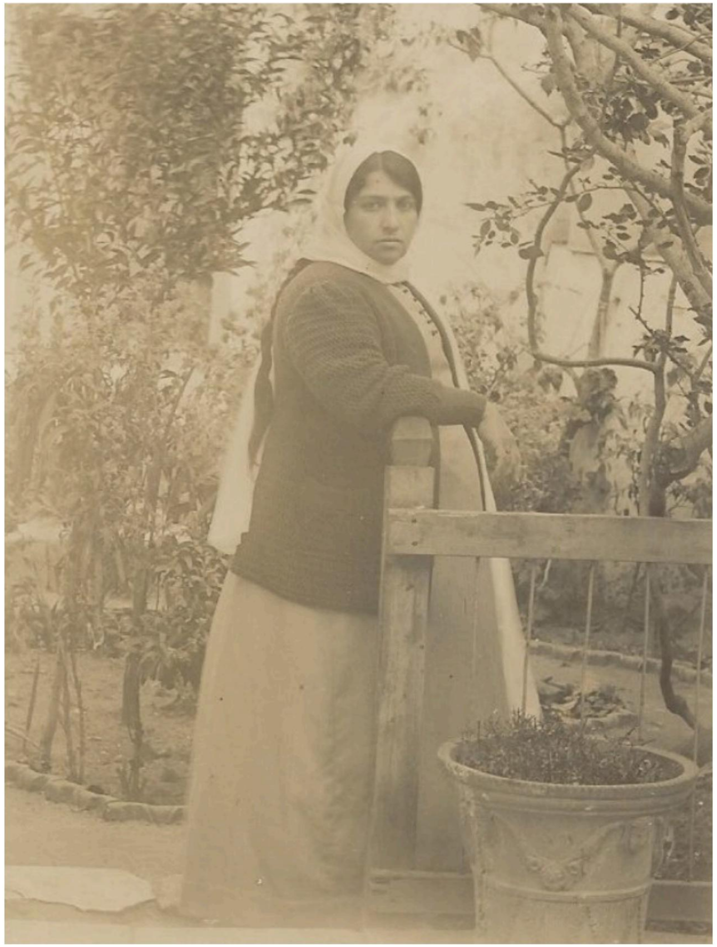


Mirza Jalal Shahid and Ruha Shahid (daughter of Abdul Baha)

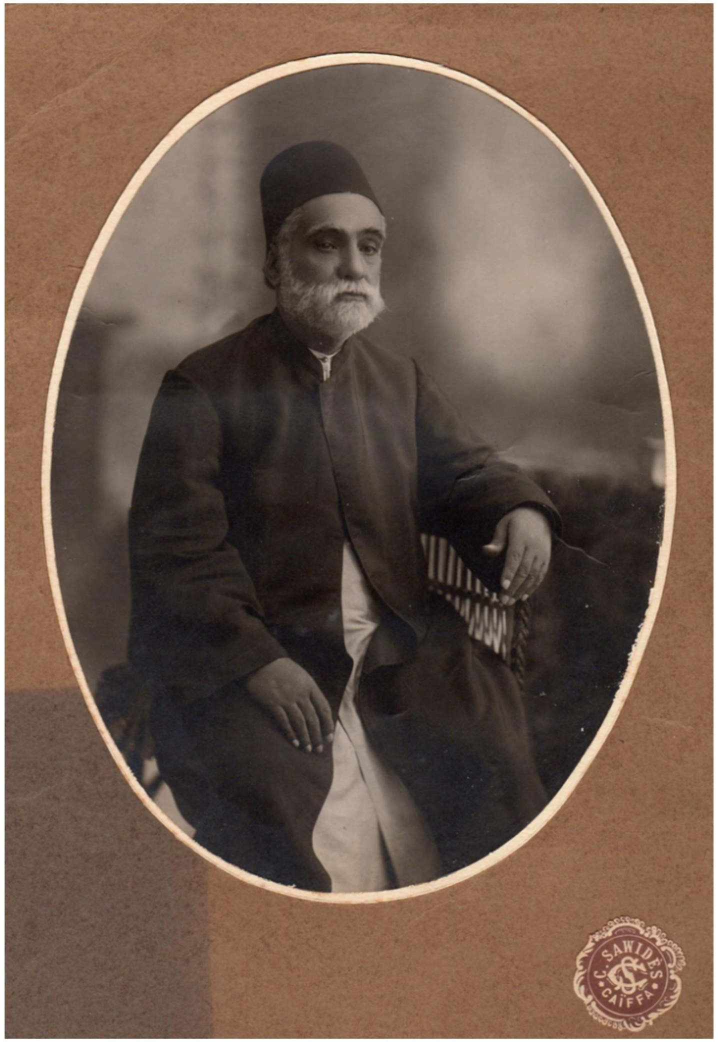


Gawhar Khanum, third wife of Baha'u'llah, mother of Forough Khanum.

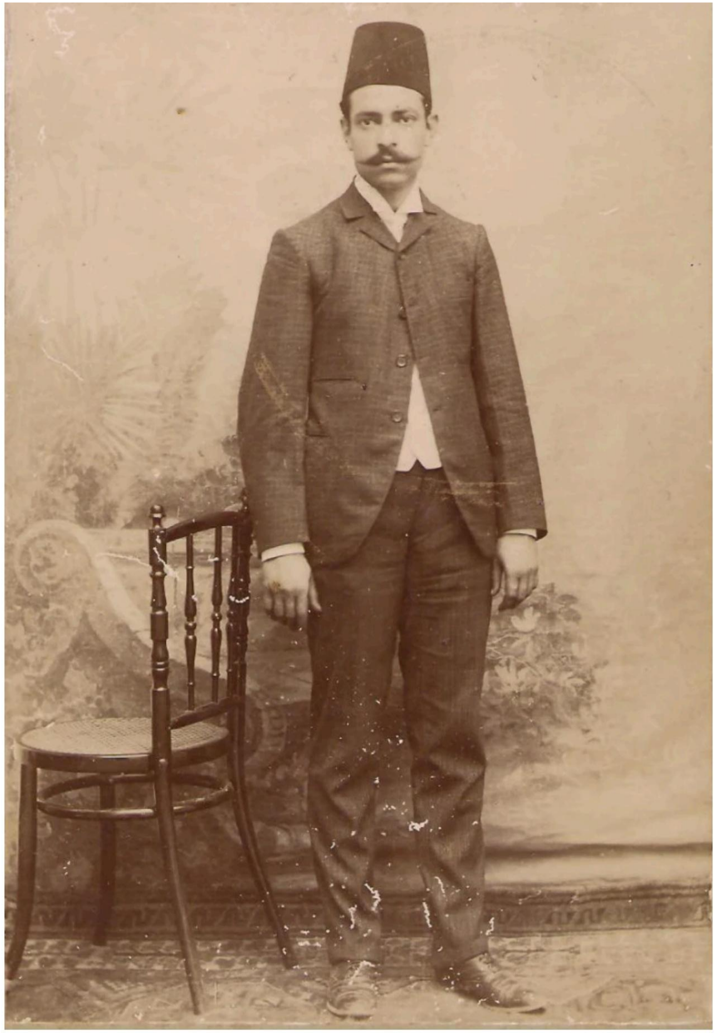
Center: Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney



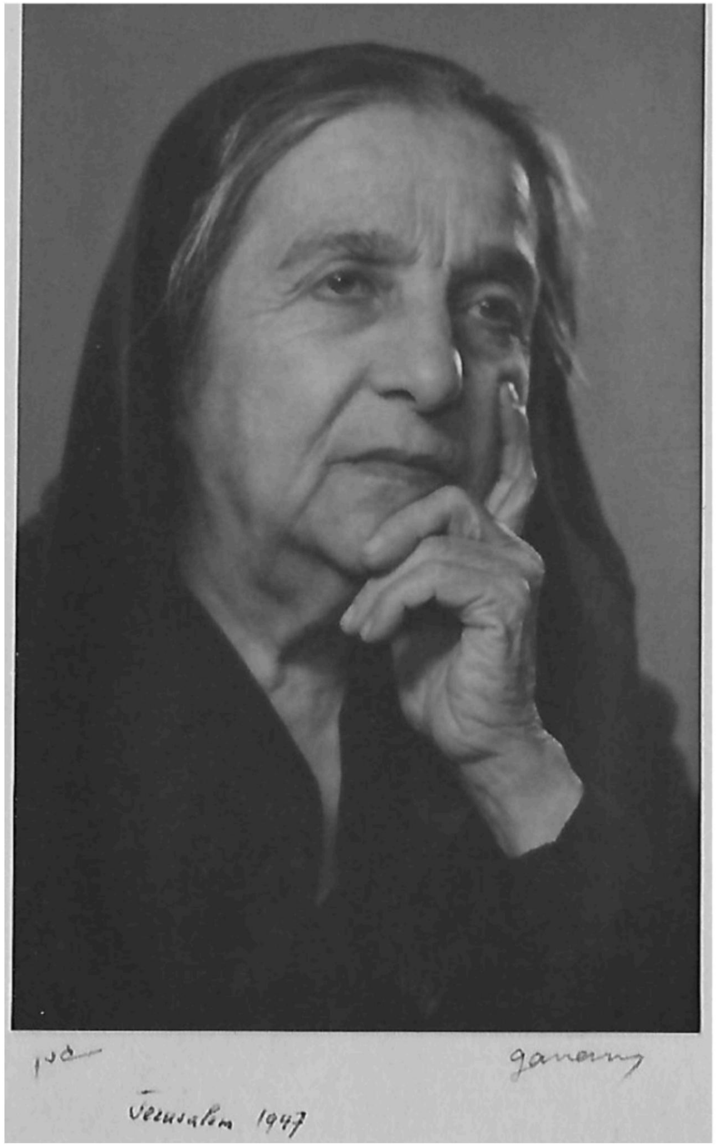
Forough Khanum, daughter of Baha'u'llah, the only child from his third wife Gowhar Khanum. In her home Bahji near Acre.



Mirza Mohsen Afnan , son- in- law of Abdul'Baha and husband of Touba Khanum



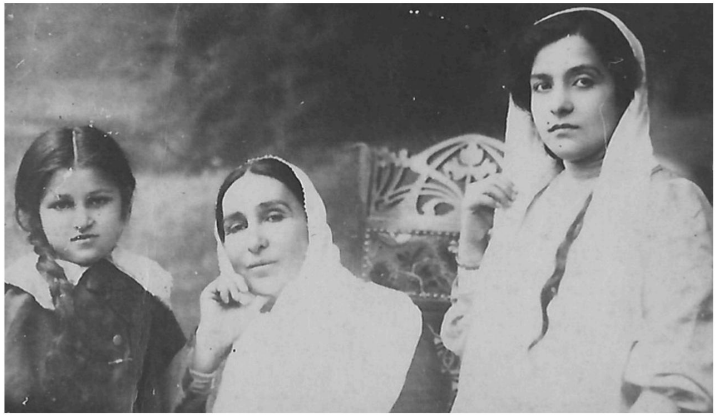
Mirza Jalal Shahid, son-in- law of Abdu' Baha and husband of Rouha Khanum



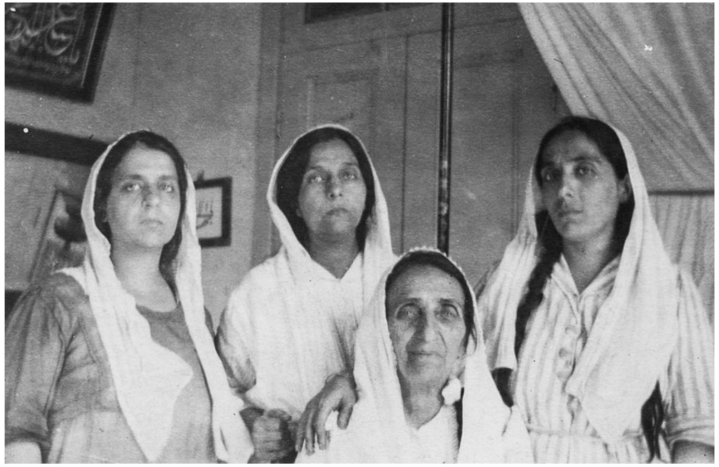
Jerusalem 1947

Zia Khanum , daughter of Abdul’Baha , mother of the Guardian

Shoghi Effendi and his sister Rouhanguise Rabbani

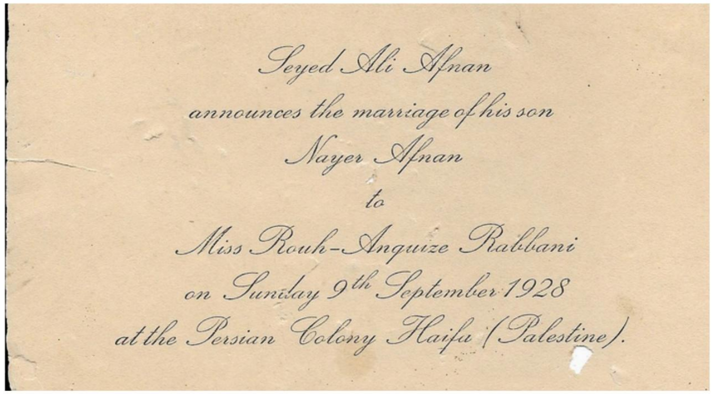


Seated centre, Munireh Khanum, wife of Abdul Baha with her daughter Zia Khanum and her grand daughter Rouhanguise



Bahiyeh Khanum seated
From R to L : Rouha Khanum, Zia Khanum and Munavar Khanum

This photo of the children of Rouha Khanum and Mirza Jalal Shahid was taken in the garden at 9 Persian Street, Haifa, circa 1922:

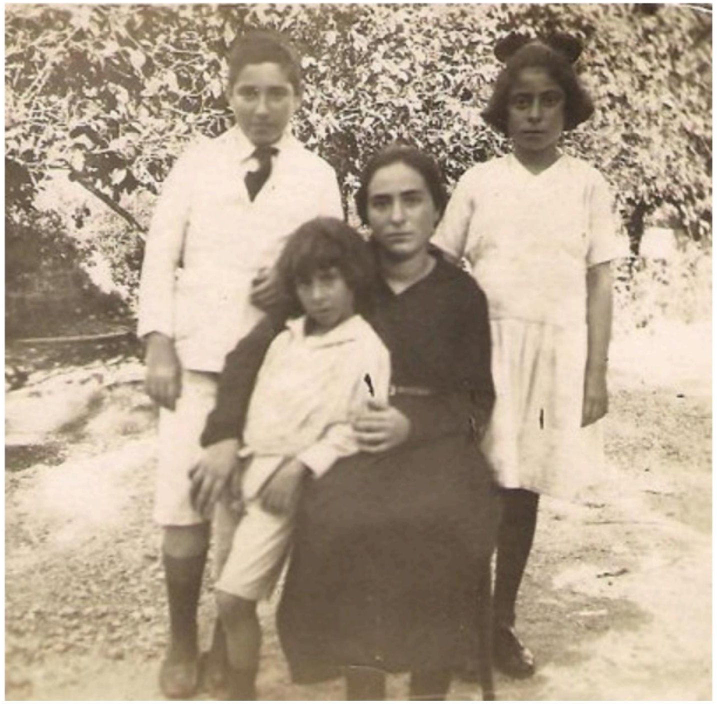


Seyed Ali Afnan
announces the marriage of his son
Nayer Afnan
to
Miss Rouh-Anguize Rabbani
on Sunday 9th September 1928
at the Persian Colony Haifa (Palestine).

Nayer Afnan and Rouhanguise Rabbani marriage invite

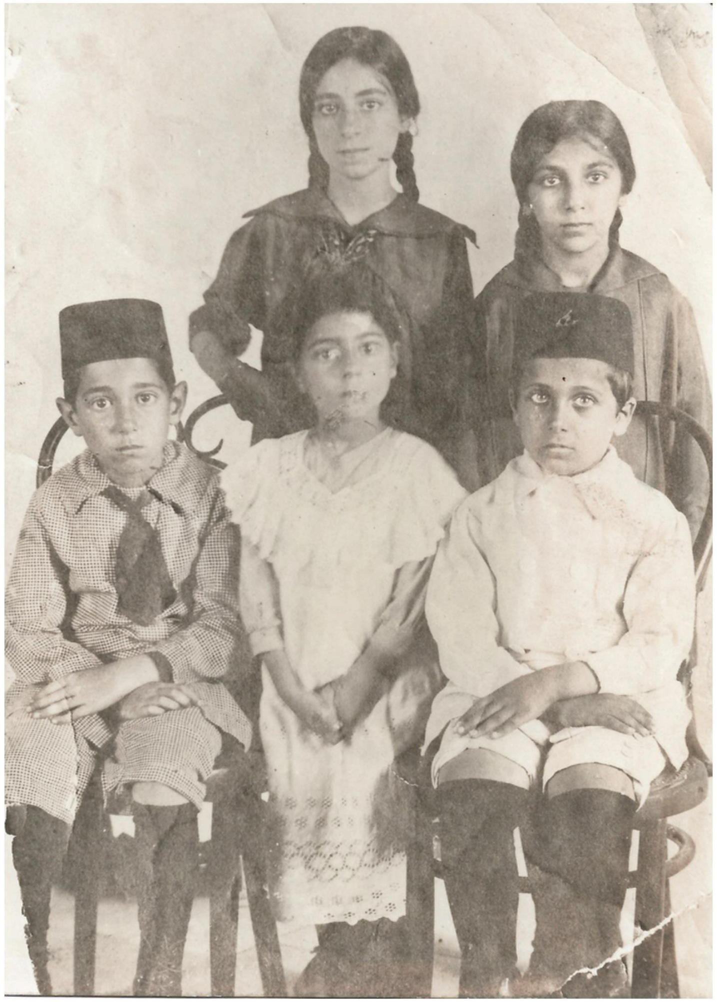
This photo of Mary Maxwell (Ruhiyyih Khanum) and some of ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s grandchildren was taken by Lake Tiberius, circa 1923:

Nayer Afnan and Ruhanguise Afnan, sister of Shoghi Effendi, 1928

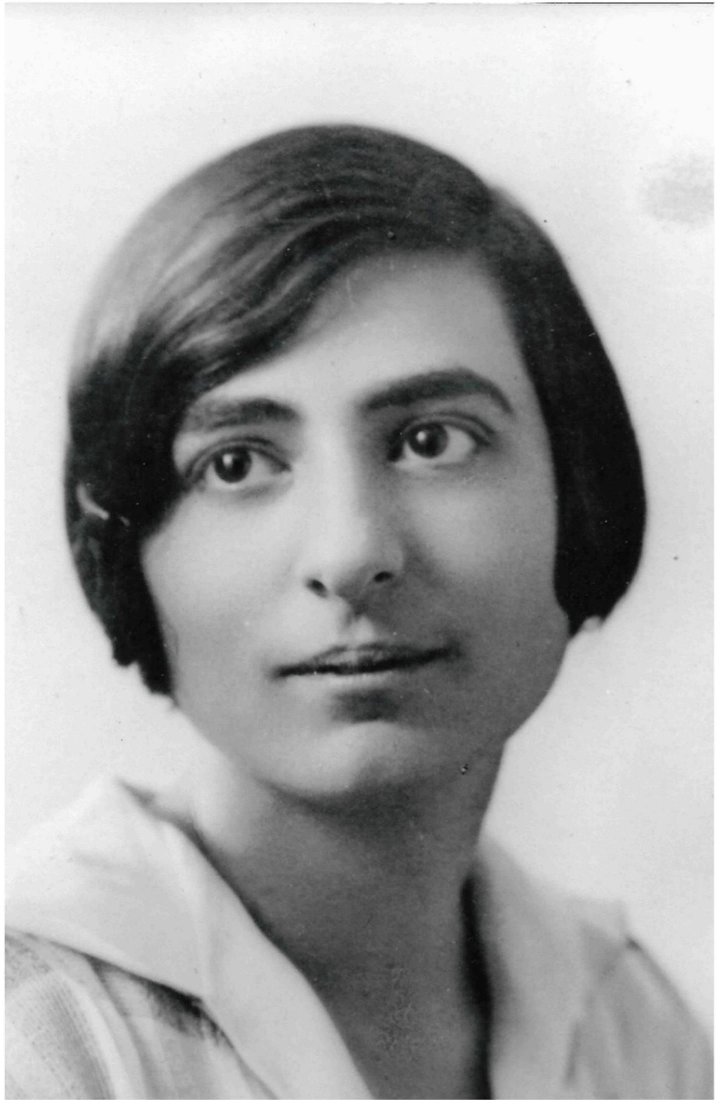


'Abdu'l-Baha's Shahid family grandchildren. Left to right standing at back: Munib Shahid and Zahra Shahid. Standing front: Hassan Jalal Shahid. Sitting front: Maryam Shahid.

Mary Maxwell (standing at the back). Left to Right: Riaz Rabbani, Nouriyeh (daughter of 'Abdu'l-Baha's housekeeper), Hassan Jalal Shahid, Fuad Afnan.



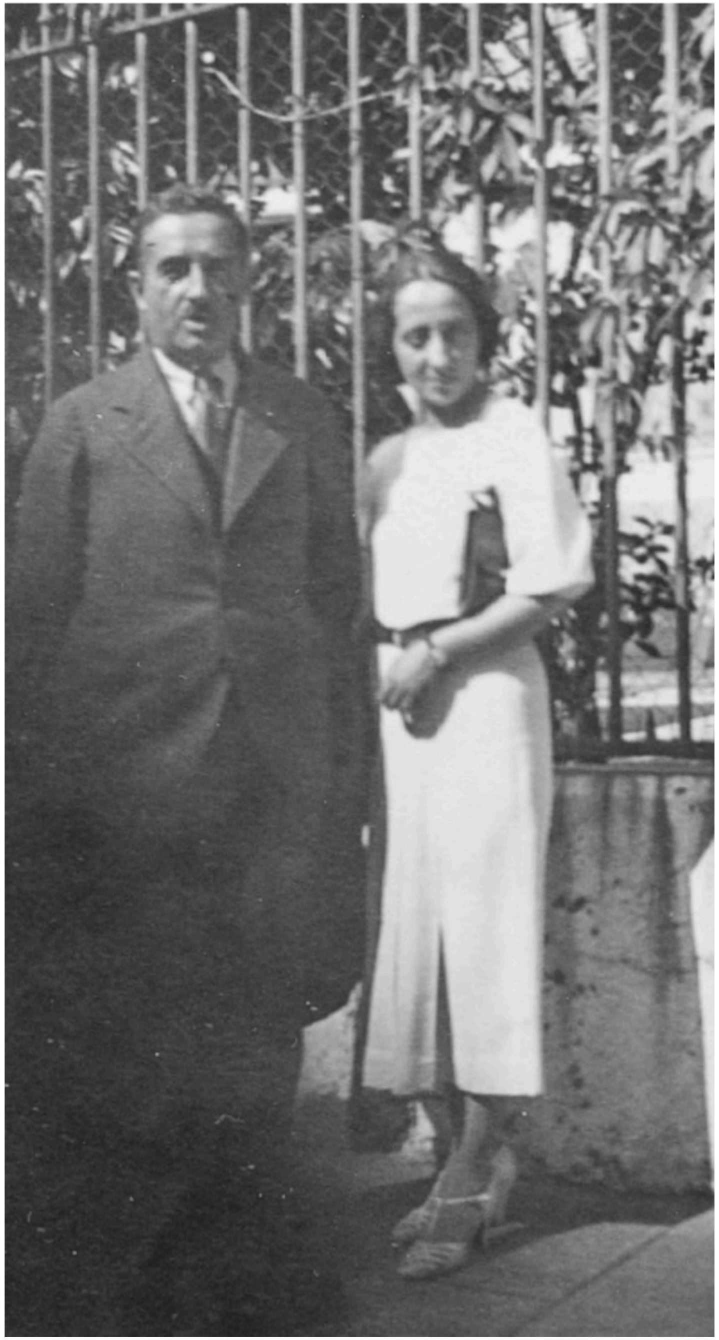
Left to Right
Back Row: Maryam Jalal Shahid, Mehranguise Rabbani
Front Row: Ruhi Mohsen Afnan, Zahra Jalal Shahid, Hossein Rabbani



Maryam Jalal Shahid ,eldest daughter of Rouha Khanum

This photo of 'Abdu'l-Baha's two most prominent grandsons was taken in Haifa:

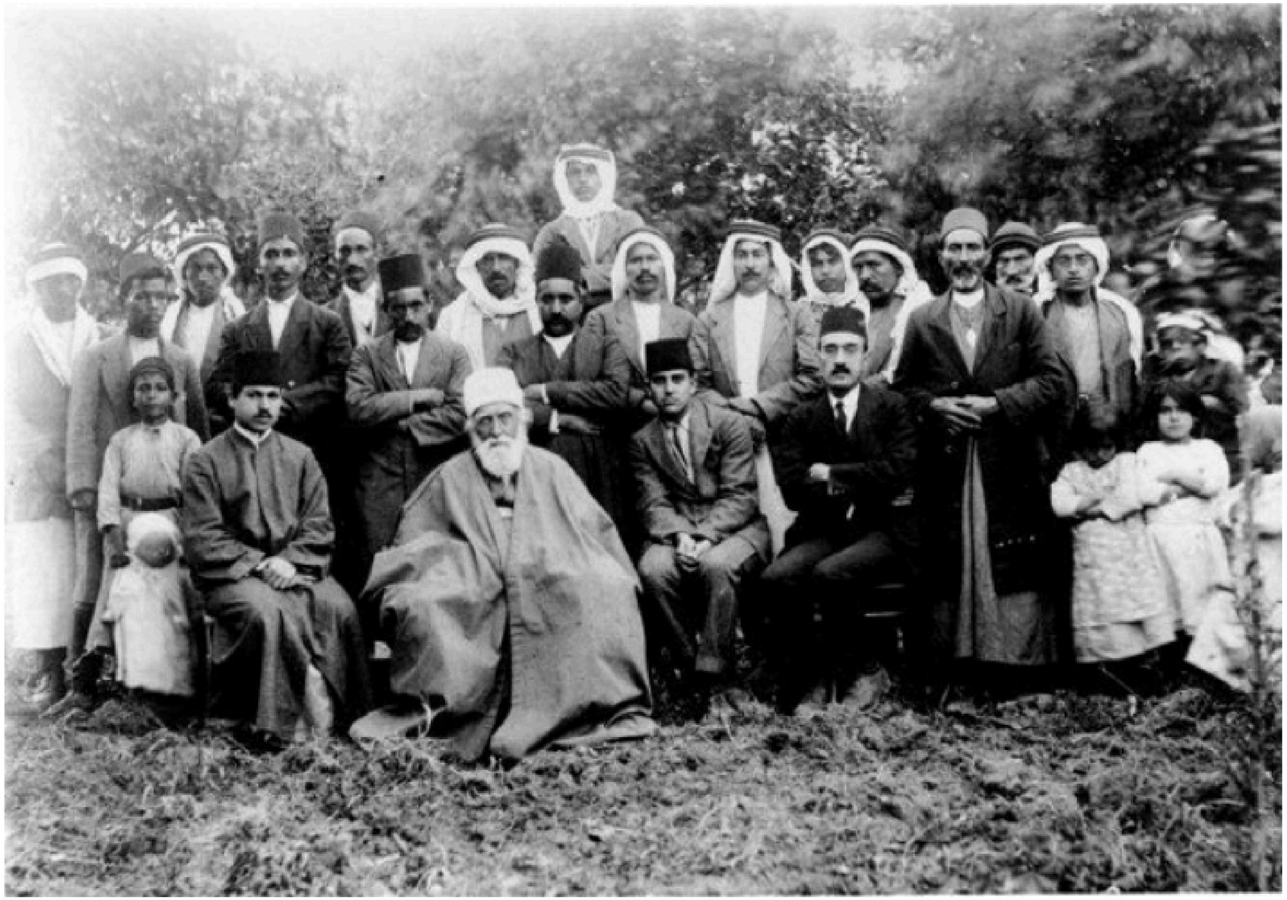
Shoghi Effendi (sitting) and Ruhi Afnan (standing).



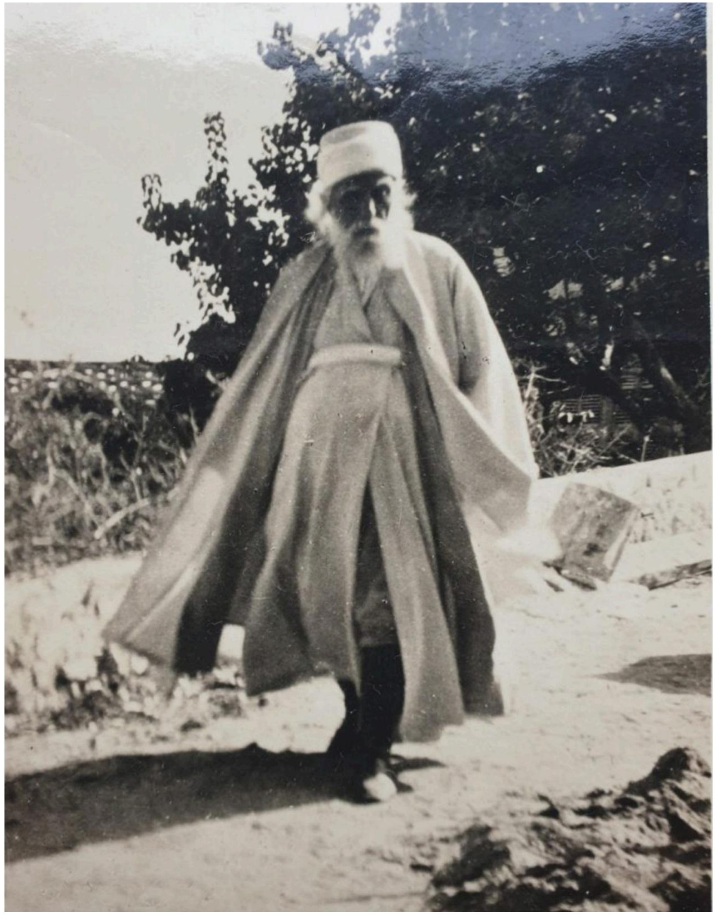
Eldest son and daughter of Touba Khanum:Ruhi Afnan and Soraya Afnan

Shoghi Effendi Rabbani

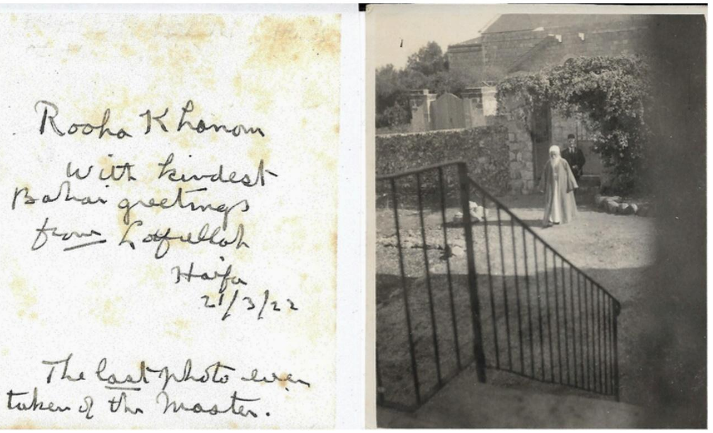
This photo of ‘Abdu’l-Baha with Jalal Azal, grandson of Mirza Yahya Subh-i-Azal, shows that ‘Abdu’l-Baha was willing to forgive the descendants of those who opposed the Baha’i Faith and its leaders. Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid made reference to this photo in her 1997 letter to the Universal House of Justice (see Writings section).



FRONT ROW (L to R): Sobhi (‘Abdu’l-Baha’s faithful secretary), ‘Abdu’l-Baha, Jalal Azal, Azizullah Bahadur.



Abdu'l- Baha

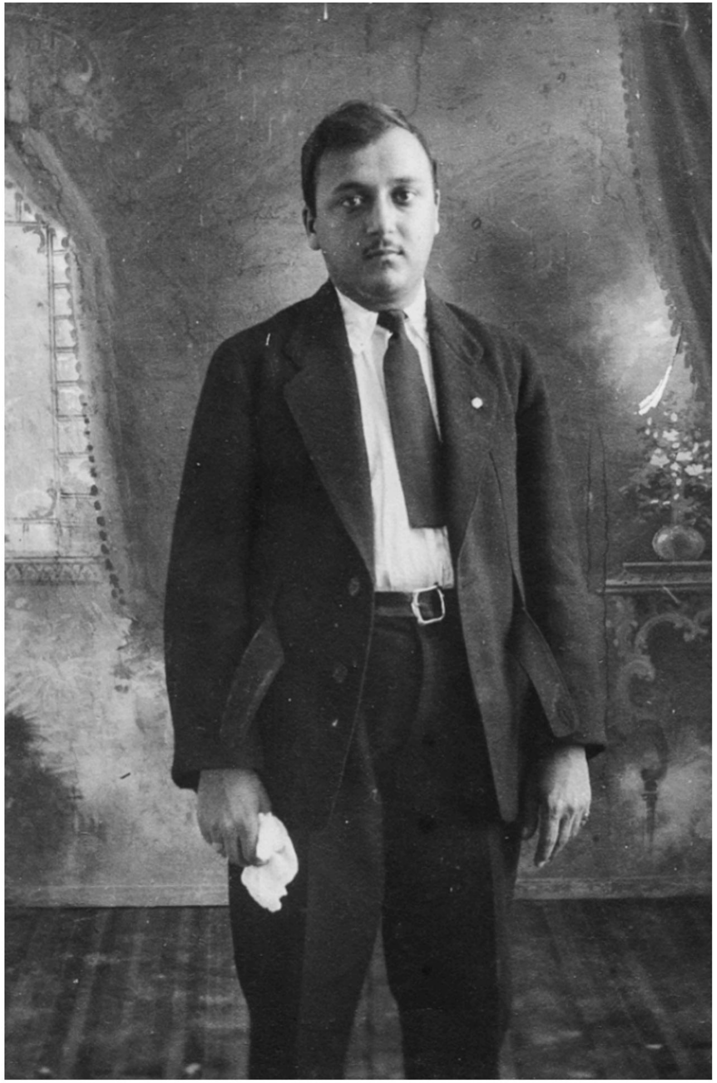


Rooha Khanom

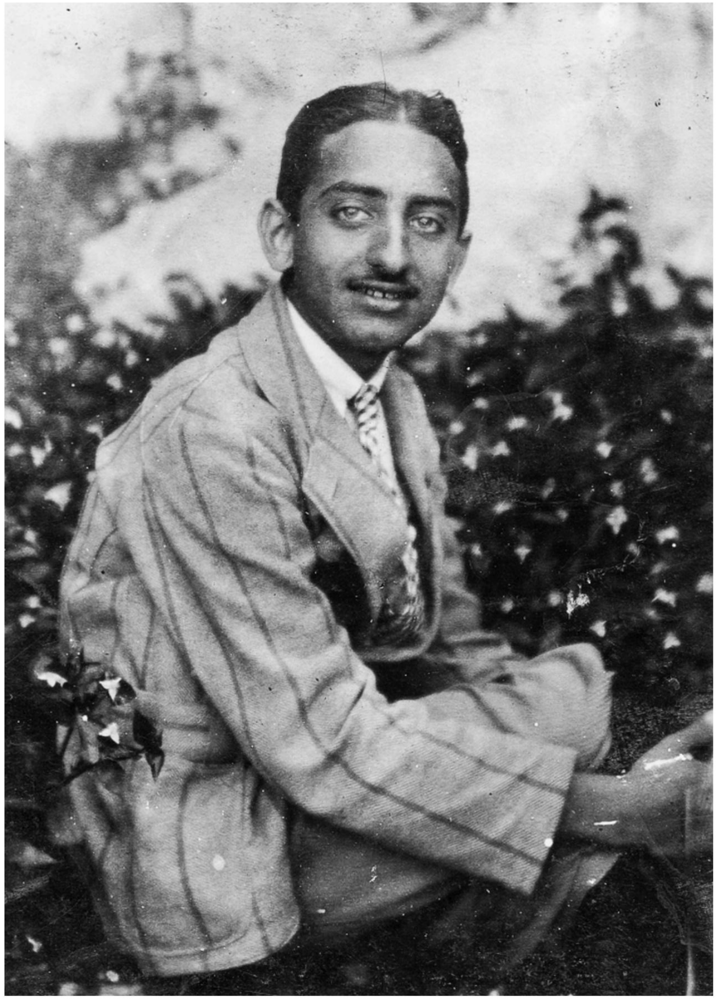
with kindest
Bahai greetings
from Lotfullah
Haifa
21/3/22

The last photo ever
taken of the Master.

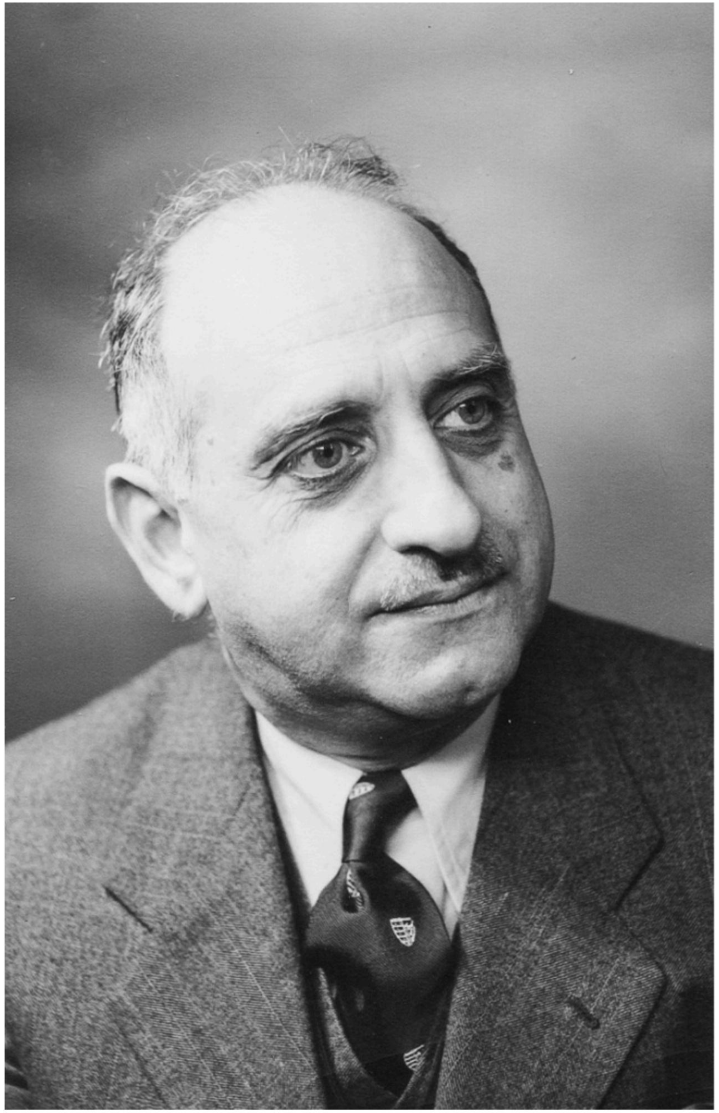
Last picture of Abdul Baha sent to his daughter Rouha Khanum by Lotfullah Hakim, Hand of the Cause.



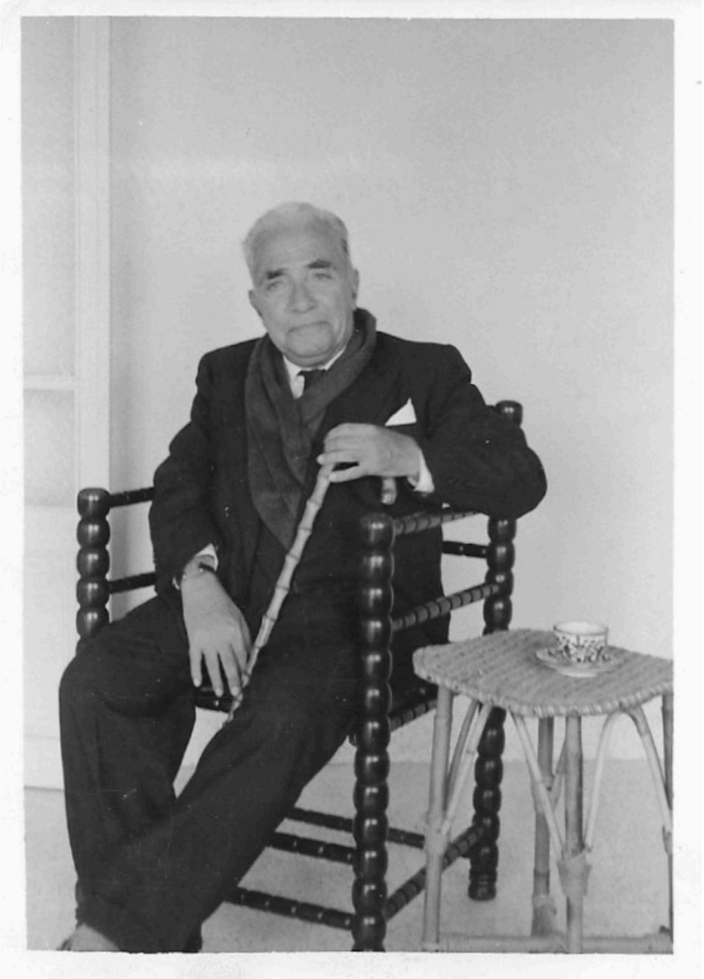
Shoghi Effendi Rabbani



Soheil Afnan , Shoghi Effendi's cousin



Soheil Afnan, cousin of Shoghi Effendi

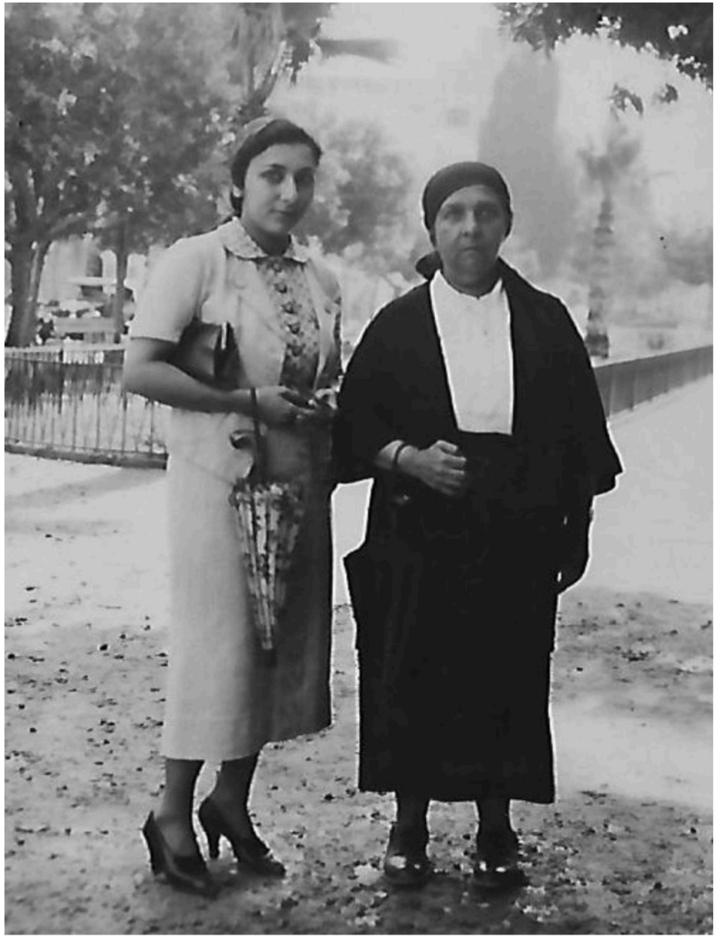


Dr Fayzi Afnan, son of Forough Khanum, daughter of Baha'u'llah and Sayed Ali Afnan

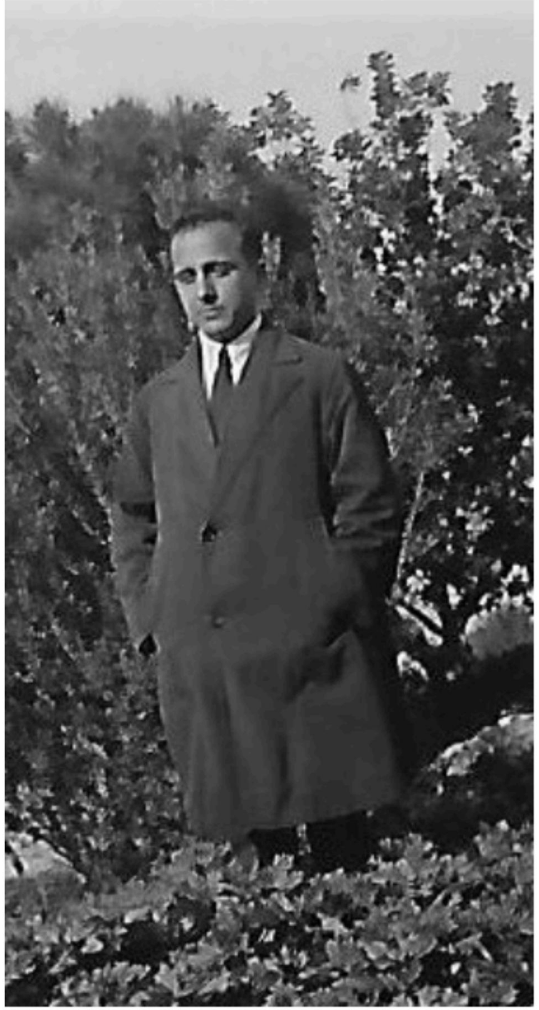
Munib Shahid ,Shoghi Effendi’s cousin

Dr Munib Jalal Shahid, grandson of Abdul’Baha

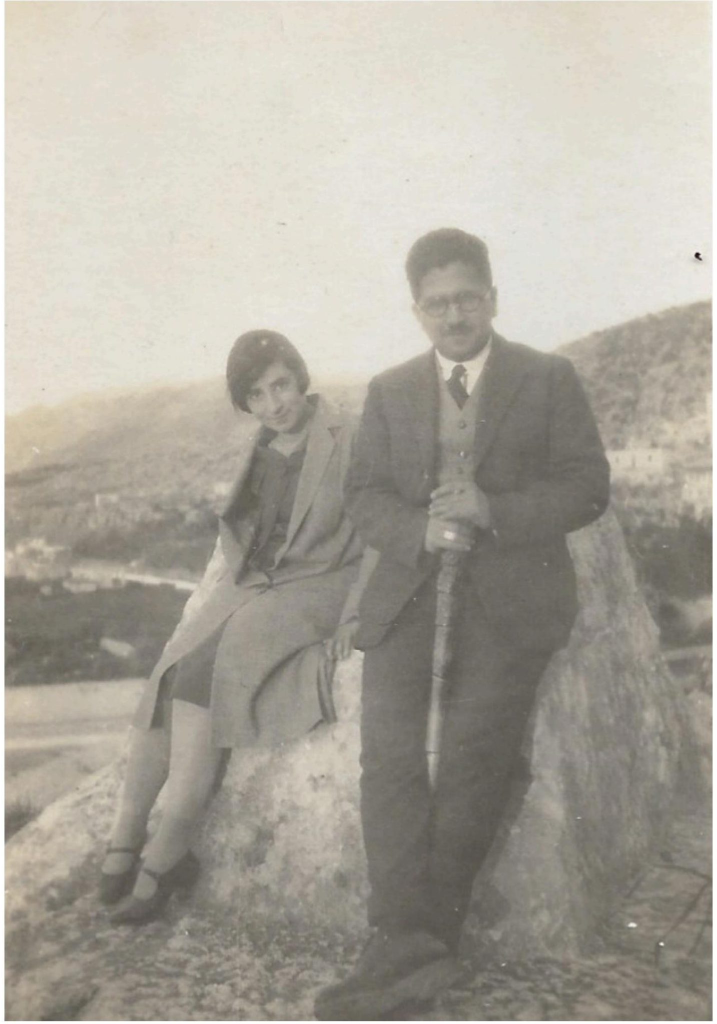
Dr Munib Jalal Shahid and his younger brother Hassan Jalal Shahid, grandsons of Abdul’Baha and cousins of Shoghi Effendi



Zia Khanum, mother of Shoghi Effendi, with her daughter Mehranguise



Hossein Rabbani, brother of Shoghi Effendi



Hassan Ali Afnan and Mehranguise Rabbani Afnan, sister of Shoghi Effendi

Hassan Ali Afnan. son of Furughiyeh Khanum

The children of Ruhi and Zahra Afnan

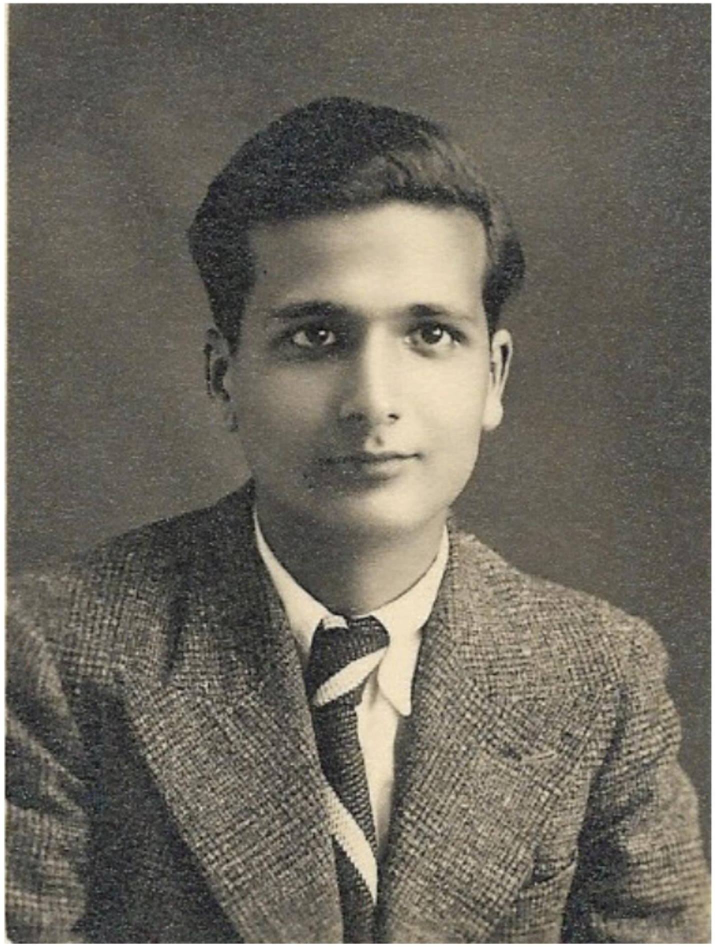
Rouhanguise Rabbani Afnan and her daughter
Maliheh Afnan
Sister and niece of Shoghi Effendi 1948

Ruhi Afnan and Zahra Shahid Afnan

Right : Iraj Afnan
Left : Parviz Afnan 1947

from L to R :
Ruhi Afnan carrying his son Parviz Afnan
Soraya Afan, sister of Ruhi
unknown
Zahra Afnan Shahid , wife of Ruhi Afnan
Hassan Jalal Shahid, brother of Zahra Afnan
front: Iraj Afnan, son of Ruhi and Zahra

Hossein Rabbani, brother of Shoghi Effendi with his wife Gerda and daughter Zia, 1958

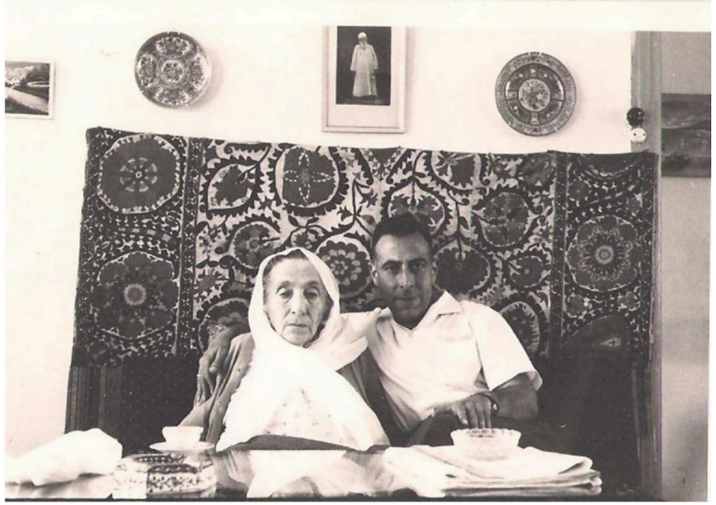


Riaz Rabbani, youngest brother of Shoghi Effendi

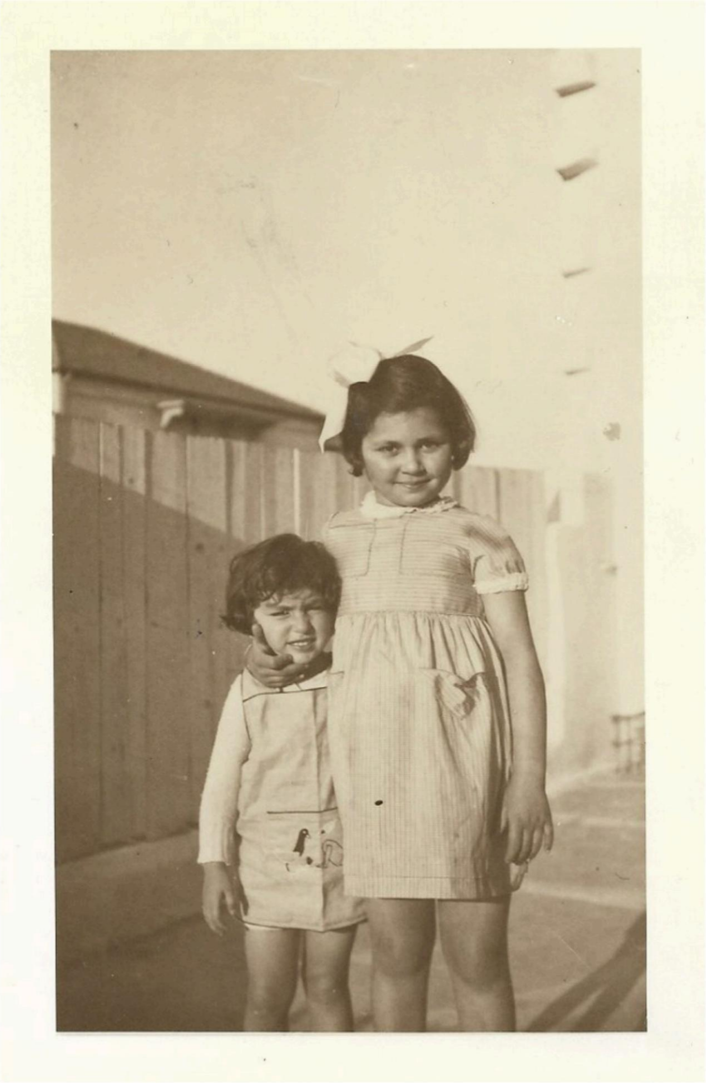
top left: Mirza Hadi Shirazi (father of the Guardian)
top right with Zia Khanum and Riaz Rabbani
bottom right in Karm with Rouhanguise Rabbani

Zia Khanum and her youngest son Riaz

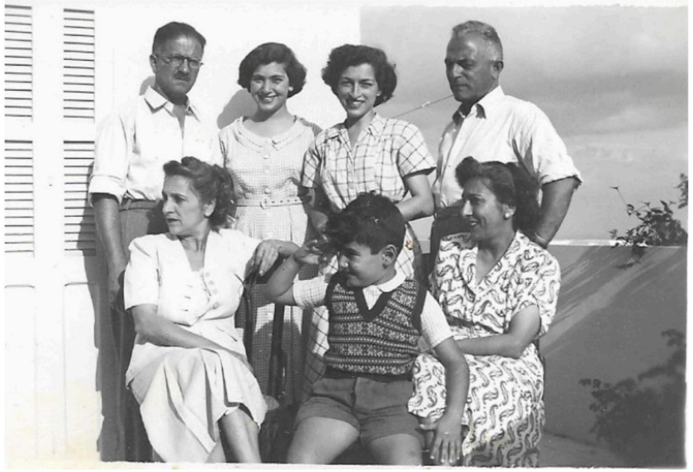
Hassan Afnan, Maliheh Afnan, Bahiyeh Afnan
Front: Rouhanguise Afnan, Hussein Afnan, Mehranguise Afnan



Rouha Khanum with her youngest son, Hassan Jalal Shahid 1961



Bahiyeh Afnan , daughter of Nayyir Afnan and her cousin Furugh Afnan , daughter of Hussein Afnan in Haifa, circa 1935



Front row left: Rouhanguise, eldest sister of the Guardian. Back row right her husband Nayer Ali Afnan and their two daughters Bahiyeh and Maliheh.
Back row left, Hassan Ali Afnan husband of Mehranguise, younger sister of the Guardian and their son Hussein. 1950

Bahiyeh Afnan and Maliheh Afnan , nieces of the Guardian, Karm,circa 1946

Bahiyeh Afnan, Maliheh Afnan with Hussein Afnan

Hassan Jalal Shahid and his wife Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid (niece of Shoghi Effendi) 1964

Hassan Ali Afnan and his son Hussein ,1969

From L to R: Ruhi Mohsen Afnan, Parviz Afnan, Parvine Shahid, Zahra Shahid Afnan, Soraya Afnan and Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid , 1970, Iran

Hassan Jalal Shahid and **Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid**, and to my aunt **Zahra Shahid Afnan**, who always shared their appreciation, understanding and love of the Bahai Faith and its principles as taught and passed on by Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha.

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Contact: parvineshahid9@gmail.com

The Universal House of Justice
POB 155
31001 Haifa
Israel

May 2, 1997

Gentlemen:

I was recently looking through some old photographs taken in the first decades of this century - pictures of groups of Bahais in many of which the Master, Abdul Baha, appears: elderly, benovelent, masterful, wise, sometimes looking tired, other times with the shadow of a smile on his face, always the sage-like central figure. There was no doubting it, he not only brought together, but held together, the group of believers, friends and often members of his family, brought together because of their faith, loyalty and sense of commitment to the Revelations of the Bab and Baha'u'llah and the new message that they presented to a world badly in need of unity, brotherhood, peace and cooperation.

One picture that caught my attention was one where on the Master's left sat a good-looking young man.

Who was he, I asked.

None other than Jalal Azal, the grandson of Yahya Azal, I was told.

How come he was sitting next to the Master in that group picture, I asked.

It appears - correct me if this information is wrong - that the Master invited the two sons of Yahya Azal, together with the grandchildren, Jalal and Ma'ereh, to come to Haifa. The eldest son was unable to leave Cyprus, due to age and circumstance, but his brother Mirza Ahmad came, lived his bachelor life at the Pilgrim House at the Shrine of the Bab and died in Haifa. Jalal himself came to Haifa, and with the help of the Master found very respectable employment at the Land Settlement office and worked there for many years. His sister, Ma'ereh Azal, for many years devoted herself, as a companion, to the Greatest Holy Leaf, Bahiyeh Khanum.

If you are still reading this letter allow me to come to a matter that strikes me as rather strange.

How was it that the Master was prepared to forget, to forgive, to overlook and be magnanimous in this bringing together of the fold, uniting, harmonizing, and at the same time setting an example that was admirable, broad-minded, far sighted, and so true to the true precepts of the Faith... whereas my daughter's very sincere wish to become an accepted member of the Faith and the community was met with total silence?

How was it that the Master gave the sons and the grandchildren of Yahya Azal a chance, received them with open arms and did not consider them and their descendants 'covenant breakers' in perpetuity?

How is it that the House of Justice takes it upon itself to close doors in the face of the great grand-daughter of the Master, when he was willing to open so many doors for the children of Yahya Azal and his grandchildren? What is stranger still is that it is all done to a young person, who even though she has been out for all the thirty years of her life, is nevertheless a committed, faithful believer who seriously and joyfully strives to meet the challenges that the Faith sets for her. Can you blame me if I say that it is sad, painful and disappointing that the House of Justice, to whom she addressed herself, reached their decision about her, sight unseen, in absentia, unknown, unquestioned and in total silence?

We have just gone through the twelve-day period of the feast of Rezvan. Atime when

(See note 1 at the end of this letter)

and when

"God hath, likewise, as a bounty from His presence, abolished the concept of "uncleanness", whereby divers things and peoples have been held to be impure. He, of a certainty, is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous. Verily, all created things were immersed in the sea of purification when, on that first day of Rezvan, We shed upon the whole of creation the splendours of Our most excellent Names and Our most exalted Attributes. This, verily, is a token of My loving providence, which hath encompassed all the world. Consort ye then with the followers of all religions, and proclaim ye the Cause of your Lord, the Most Compassionate; this is the very crown of deeds, if ye be of them who understand." (The Kitab-i-Aqdas p.47)

If God, the ever forgiving, the Most Generous, has "as a bounty from His presence" abolished the concept of "uncleanness", do you think that the concept of "pollution" has a place in his great schem of things? Yet the House of Justice has chosen to designate my daughter, whom they do not know and have never met, as a polluting influence.

Justice, in all world religions, has always been tempered and balanced by mercy and compassion . God, in decreeing the harmony and balance that his creation needed, decreed those two as well. Maybe the House of Justice, "they that, for the sake of God, arise to serve His Cause" and "are the recipients of divine inspiration from the unseen Kingdom", would not be wasting their time if they were to consider those two principles, when, according to the Aqds, "all matters of State should be referred to the House of Justice, but acts of worship must be observed according to that which God hath revealed in His Book."

Nowhere in the writings of Bahaullah or the Master do I find anything that says that men, divinely guided or otherwise, can decide on the _faith_ of anyone. That, it appears to me, was solely between humanity and its Creator. Hence the absence of a go-between clergy.

As ever, when I despair of the actions of men, I return to the revealed sources and it is with great hope, joy and elation that I read, for example, in the Will of Baha'u'llah:

See Note 2 below

Thank God for that!

Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid

Note 2.

از ملکوت بیان مقصود عالمیان
نازل شد آنچه که سبب حیات عالم
و نجات امم است ٭ نصایح قلم اعلی
بگوش حقیقی اصغا نمائید ٭ انها خیر
لکم عما علی الارض ٭ یشهد بذلک
کتابی العزیز البدیع

Note 1

قد طلع جمال القدس عن خلف
الحجاب ٭ (وان هذا لشیء عجاب) ٭
وانصعقت الارواح من نار الانجذاب
٭ (وان هذا لامر عجاب) ٭ ثم
افاقت وطارت الی سرادق القدس
فی عرش القباب ٭ (وان هذا لسر عجاب

That which is conducive to the regeneration of the world and the salvation of the peoples and kindreds of the earth hath been sent down from the heaven of the utterance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. Give ye a hearing ear to the counsels of the Pen of Glory. Better is this for you than all that is on the earth. Unto this beareth witness My glorious and wondrous Book.

Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid
23 Ansdell Terrace
London W8 5BY
England.

Mr. Adib Taherzadeh
Universal House of Justice
POB 155
31001 Haifa
Israel

December 1994

Dear Mr. Taherzadeh:

It is with a heavy heart and a feeling of great sadness that I write this to you.

I recently came across your book "The Covenant of Baha'u'llah" published in 1992. The introduction inside the dust cover reads:

> TheCovenant of Baha'u'llah is a unique and priceless heritage, unprecedented in past Dispensations. It carries within itself enormous potentialities for the future in the unfoldment of Baha'u'llah's new world order, and ultimately the Golden Age of Mankind.

Ringing, resounding words with which I could not agree more.

Familiar with your four-part work on the "Revelation of Baha'u'llah" I quickly turned to the list of contents. In Part Three, The Lesser Covenant, you have a chapter which you call 'The Faithless Relatives of Shoghi Effendi.'

May I say, it left me totally dumbstruck!

A book with the shining name of Baha'u'llah in its title, written by someone called not only Adib, but Taherzadeh as well; a fifth generation Bahai and a member of the Universal House of Justice; a writer whose work is considered "an outstanding contribution to Bahai literature... a magnificent book" by the Bahai Reviewing Panel of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the UK. A writer of recognised "scholarship and eloquence", making allegations, accusing, sitting as judge and jury and passing sentence on all the relatives of Shoghi Effendi. These are the descendants of the Bab, Baha'u'llah and the Master, and for you to so blithely describe them as Covenant breakers and faithless is to assume powers of judgement that leaves one aghast.

Contrary to the events of Part One and Two of your book, when I was neither alive or around, the events of the above-mentioned chapter were very much a part of my life. My maternal grandparents, who were Shoghi Effendi's parents, his aunts and their husbands, their children and grandchildren, my own parents, aunt and both paternal and maternal uncles and their children - they were all very much a part of my life and my existence. I knew a great deal about them, and most of all, I knew a great deal about my parents, Nayer and Rouhanguise Afnan, about my husband, Hassan Shahid, and myself, Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid.

I do not know where you get your information about the family of Shoghi Effendi, but in your description of their behaviour and motives I could detect no relationship to the facts of the lives of the people you so carelessly write about. Had you taken the trouble to contact some of them, you, like all scholars, would have found that history is a many-faceted thing. Even a half-hearted effort at research into the lives, characters and motives of those mentioned, would have quickly shown that the facile, careless and carefree condemnation that you scatter around is rather rudely denuded of any relation to fact and reality.

Of course, had you done so I suppose that might have exposed you to the danger of becoming a 'covenant breaker' yourself, and maybe that is not a risk worth taking, even in the service of scholarship. But you would have found the facts very different from those which you recount.

Knowing that there was no effort made by you to gather first-hand information from or about the people involved, I can only conclude that you had only two sources to fall back on:

1. Shoghi Effendi's cables, &
2. Hearsay.

Regarding hearsay, I will give you just one brief example here and return to it later. I have with my own ears heard and with my own eyes read about Rouhiyeh Khanum being "the last surviving member of Baha'u'llah's family. (Should you wish to have chapter and verse I shall be happy to provide them). This I consider hearsay supreme, but it seems to be accepted as fact in certain quarters.

I should now like to come to a much more important source, Shoghi Effendi's cables, which you so fully quote. (Incidentally, this gives me my first chance to see them.) They throw a very interesting light on things.

As you fully recount in Parts One and Two of your book, both the periods of Baha'u'llah and the Master were rife with the problems created by the active, agressive and deliberate opposition created by members of the family who opposed them during those periods.

Very well aware of all these matters, none, and I repeat none, of the members of the family that you deal with in your chapter wanted either to question, undermine, or disturb the Guardianship of Shoghi Effendi, or hinder the execution of the big trust placed in his hands by the will of the Master. For years they helped him in all sorts of ways and in different capacities, until Shoghi Effendi saw fit to distance each and every one of them from the Cause and the community. You only have his version of why he considered them unworthy and systematically condemned them. But, and here is the point that I wish to underline: every one of them saw fit to withdraw quietly, without creating any trouble or difficulty. Not one of them, beginning with his parents, and down to my generation, raised a voice in dissent or made an unseemly move. In the interest of the Cause and its unity, matters as dear to their hearts as they were to the hearts of Baha'u'llah and the Master, none of them disputed these verdicts. But this silence should not be misrepresented as an admission of guilt.

The family accepted Shoghi Effendi's decision and judgement precisely because he was the Guardian of the Faith and the Master had so designatedhim. On what basis, and why such judgement and condemnations were made may have been another matter, and maybe, with time, that too will become clear. But, Mr. Taherzadeh, and here I speak to you as a privileged member of a family who has considered its condition a form of shahadat in the service of the Cause, you, in one brief chapter, in a book that bears the illustrious name of Baha'u'llah, and in a section regarding the Guardian of the Faith, have sat in solitary judgement all over again. You have dragged the names of sincere Bahais and silent sufferers into the mire. If we are all as awful as you say we are, do not sully the names of Baha'u'llah, the Master and Shoghi Effendi by saying that all Shoghi Effendi's family were faithless covenant breakers. Stories that do not stand either the test of close examination or first-hand knowledge are not worthy of inclusion in a book regarding the Covenant and Cause of Baha'u'llah, to which they, one and all, were true and sincere, and in the precepts and principles of which they all most truly believed.

The family's dedication to the Faith ran not only in their blood but in their hearts and their minds. Under very difficult circumstances they maintained it. For them it was a source of succour and support. They were out of the community and they were out of the Cause, and to this day, I for one, have a long list of questions to find out why. However, I can vouch for one thing with determined conviction: they were neither covenant breakers nor 'faithless'. The very term 'naghezeen' denotes those people who had gone against, deliberately undermined, and plotted against the will of Baha'u'llah. 'Naghzé Ahdé Jamalé Ghedam' was to refuse to accept the position of the Master as appointed in Baha'u'llah's will. Can you, in all honesty, consider anything any members of the family of Shoghi Effendi did, or might have been accused of doing, as casting doubt on the position and authority of Shoghi Effendi, as set out in the will of the Master?

Not one of the daughters of the Master, including the mother of Shoghi Effendi, their husbands, their children or their sons-in-law - Afnans, Aghsans or son and grandchildren of Sultan el Shuhada - ever cast any shadow of doubt on the will of the Master or Shoghi Effendi's position and authority. Should you wish to go into this matter in greater detail I shall be very happy to do so, in person or by letter.

But to return to hearsay.

Of the long list that I could draw up for you, I should just like to point out the following:

My parents, Rouhanguise and Nayer Afnan, were married with the full knowledge and approval of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi. The wedding took place in the Andaroon, in the family home of the Master, in 1928. Khanum, the Great Holy Leaf, blessed the marriage in the presence of my great-grandmother, Mounireh Khanum, the wife of the Master and the other members of the family and friends. Two years later, when I was born, Khanum both blessed and honoured me when she insisted that I carry her honoured and beloved name in place of the one my parents had originally chosen for me. I can categorically claim that my father's intentions in marrying my mother was devoid of the rediculous idea that he wished to introduce the virus of covenant breaking into the family of Shoghi Effendi.

I can just as categorically state that neither of my parents were instrumental in arranging or bringing about the marriages of my aunt Mehranguise Rabbani with my uncle Hassan Afnan, or of my uncle Dr. Faizy Afnan with their cousin, Soraya Afnan.

As to my marriage to Hassan Shahid - Shoghi Effendi makes it sound like an offence - I would like to say that by the time of that marriage in 1964, my father had been dead for eleven years. Shoghi Effendi had not seen his sister, my mother, since the late 30s, and she certainly was a stranger to you. Had you met her or enquired about her you would have found out for yourself what a lady she truly was. Blessed by great dignity and a strong sense of honour, she was a worthy member of an honourable family whose good name she ever sought to safeguard, and the high esteem in which it had always been held she always tried to maintain. To say of her that she "did not rest until she arranged another marriage between her cousin Hassan Shahid" and myself, her daughter - as if she were hatching some dark, deep plot - could not possibly be further from the truth - and I should know- it was was my mother, my marriage and my story.

I would greatly appreciate knowing on what basis my father, Nayer Afnan, was considered "the pivot of machinations, connecting link between old and new Covenant Breakers." One thing I do know, however: far from attributing the cancer of the breast that my grandmother Fourough Khanum suffered and died from to Abdul Baha - a rediculous attribution if there ever was one, and my father and his brothers were far from rediculous people - I know for a fact, from both of my parents, of the kindness and affection shown by the Master and his daughters to my grandmother during her last illness.

As to my father being "struck down" by "God's avenging wrath" when he died - it seems to me that it is a description that could be applied to anyone's death, for who knows whether it's God's avenging wrath or His loving mercy that gathers us all into the next world?

I could go on and on, Mr.Taherzadeh, taking your 'narrative' point by point and wishing you had been more scholarly about your approach. Basic research is essential to any narrative, and I am sure you did not mean to write a work of fiction - which, incidentally, also requires research.

No, Mr. Taherzadeh, Shoghi Effendi had the will of the Master and the station of Guardianship to stamp his judgements with the stamp of authority. You, a student, scholar and eloquent writer on Bahaism could, if I may say so, have dealt a bit more in the realm of الحجة والبرهان which, according to the Aghdas even applied at the level of revelation, when it states:

يا معشر العلماء ... قد افتخرتم بأسمي وغفلتم عن نفسي
اذ اتى الرحمان بالحجة والبرهان

On the other hand, maybe such an approach was a necessary component of your efforts to develop the theology of infallibility and obedience withing the Bahai Faith. Infallibility and obedience were the trade marks of the Catholic Church. For over a decade now Liberation Theology has been one of the finer achievements of that Church, in the service of the oppressed and downtrodden. Making a stand against injustice and exploitation were its main aims and guiding lights. It is ironic that one of the youngest religions in the world today should be seeking to develop a theology that harks back not to its own sources of divine inspiration, brilliantly presented by the powers of reason and intellect, but to an outmoded, discredited approach based on infallibility and obedience.

I must say, discussions of this sort make me think of Ruhi Afnan, a man I was privileged to know and of whose "increasing rebelliousness" Shoghi Effendi complained. In listening to him or reading his books, you could not have failed to realise that his one and only wish was to be of service to the Cause of Baha'u'llah and to the Master who was his mentor and inspiration. الحجه والبرهان and the full use of reason and intellect were high on his list of priorities.
He, like my father and many other members of the family, served Shoghi Effendi for many years, each in whatever capacity they had. I wonder what many of them, now 'struck down by God's avenging wrath', would say, at a gathering of the clan of the 'unfaithful family' of Shoghi Effendi. Maybe they too will be waiting for a 'liberation theologian' to release them from the bondage of injustice and exploitation that your chapter recounts. Not that it really matters, for does not the Aghdas also say:

ومن اغتاظ عليكم قابلوه بالرفق والذي زجركم لا
تزجروه دعوه بنفسه وتوكلوا على الله المنتقم العادل
القدير.

In fact, I have found it a source of comfort to turn to Kitabé Aghdas as an antidote to the pain and sadness that the reading of your book produces.

Though it hurts very badly to know that we were not able to respond to the moving call of

قوموا على نصرة امري وارتفاع كلمتي بين العالمين انا معكم
في كل الاحوال وننصركم بالحق ان كنا قادرون

it is comforting to find that it is followed by

من عرفني يقوم على خدمتي بقيام لا تقعده جنود السموات
والارضين

and even more heartening when it says

قوموا على خدمة الامر في كل الاحوال انه يؤيدكم
بسلطان كان على العالمين محيطا

Service to the Cause can and does take many forms, both within the community and outside it. In the final analysis Baha'u'llah grants one and all the supreme assurance of saying

لعمري سيفنى من في الامكان وما يبقى هو العمل الطيب
وليس لأحد ان يفتخر على احد

and again

قل روح الاعمال هو رضائي وعلق كل شيء بقبولي

Each in our own ways, you in yours and I and the various members of my family in ours, have tried to respond to the ringing challenge of

لعمري من شرب رحيق الانصاف من ايادي الألطاف
انه يطوف حول اوامري المشرقة من افق الأبداع لا
تحسبن انا انزلنا لكم الاحكام بل فتحنا ختم الرحيق
المختوم باصابع القدرة والاقتدار

It is a moving, heart-piercing, heady challenge, one that was to be met with faith, conviction and dedication, and acted upon with love and harmony, justice and unity, compassion and decency. To God one turned, His new revelation one embraced, the wine of its Truth one quaffed and in its diaphanous illumination one revelled.

As Baha'u'llah told the kings of the world

لا نريد ان نتصرف في ممالككم بل جئنا لتصرف
القلوب

This was a Cause that was not only divine but which was based on God's orders and ordinances

تمسكوا بأوامر الله واحكامه

You were enjoined to

اعملوا حدود الله وسننه ثم احفظوها كما تحفظون
اعينكم ولا تكونن من الخاسرين

and

اعملوا ما لا تنكره العقول المستقيمه ولا تجعلوا انفسكم
ملعب الجاهلين طوبى لمن تزين بطراز الاداب والاخلاق
انه ممن نصر ربه بالعمل الراسخ المبين

Having turned to Him, it was to Him that you were answerable, for it was He who

يعلم خافية القلوب وما يتحرك
به أعين اللامزين

If you did wrong - and no human being is beyond wrong-doing, the Aghdas says that

ليس لأحد يستغفر عند أحد

The framework is so clearly delineated, the guidelines so well set out. It is neither legalistic nor complicated. It dealt primarily in the realm of the heart and it called for a reaction that resonated in the activities of everyday life and living - a wholistic response worthy of the essential Divinity, Truth and Beauty of its appeal.

And, if perchance you went wrong - and who can claim to be above such waywardness? - even then God's mercy was infinite. Turn back to Him and you find that

قد اخذ الله من غوائك فأرجع اليه خاضعًا خاشعًا متذللا
انه يكفّر عنك سيئاتك ان ربك لهو التواب العزيز الرحيم
هذا نصح الله لو انت من السامعين هذا فضل الله لو انت من
المقبلين هذا ذكر الله لو انت من الشاعرين هذا كنز الله
لو انت من العارفين هذا كتاب اصبح مصباح القدم للعالم
وصراطه الاقوم ومشرق اوامر الله لو انتم تعرفون

The joy, the hope, the elation that the reading of the Kitabé Aghdas produces is palpable and real. The certainty of infallibility and willing obedience flow naturally from those inspired words. They are neither forced nor enforced.

Therein lies their power.

Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid

Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid
23 Ansdell Terrace
London W8 5BY
England

cc: Mr. Hugh Adamson,
Bahai National Centre
27 Rutland Gate
London SW7

Mr. Sarosh Zaiwalla
Senior Partner
Zaiwalla & Co., Solicitors
95a Chancery Lane
London WC2A 1DT

November 11 1993

Dear Sir:

It was with interest that I read the notice in The Independent of November 9 of the Luncheon that your firm held in honour of Madam Ruh'yyih Rabbani, "the last surviving member of the family of Bahaullah, the founder of the Bahai faith."

As a person involved in the world of legality and facts, it may be of interest to you to know that Bahaullah is not as bereft of descendants as your notice seems to indicate. The grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren of Abdul Baha, the eldest son of Bahaullah , currently alive, number twenty seven in all.

If Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, the Guardian of the Cause, (and incidentally, my maternal uncle,) considered them unworthy of membership in the community of Bahais, I do not believe that anyone can deny them their lineage and family connections. Connections, that I should like to add, have ever been a source of great inspiration, fervour and faith.

Faith born in comfort and nurtured in ease may be be easy to maintain. Faith tested and maintained through denial, denigration and casting out from its natural milieu of shared communal and religious experience, can either fall by the wayside or burn bright and inspire. It can produce a certain understanding, maturity and maybe even wisdom.

The Bab, Bahaullah, Abdul Baha and Shoghi Effendi were the source and transmitters of that faith. Their blood runs in my veins. Their inspired message and example illumine my heart, my mind and my being. I am but one of the humble descendants of that illustrious line.

In the service of truth, I thought you might be interested to know.

Yours sincerely,

Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid

Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid (Mrs.)

B. A. Shahid
23 Ansdell Terrace
London W8 5BY

cc: Mr. Hugh Adamson
Secretary General, National Spiritual Assembly of Bahais, UK
27 Rutland Gate, London SW7

Forthcoming marriages

Mr K. D. Clancy
and Miss C. P. Corrigan

The engagement is announced between Kenneth, son of Mr and Mrs Raymond Clancy, of Kilrush, Co Clare, and Caroline, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Thomas Corrigan, of Kingswood, Surrey.

Birthdays

The Right Rev James Adams, former Bishop Suffragan of Barking, 78; Mr Spiro Agnew, former US Vice-President, 75; Mr Kenneth Ashton, trade-union leader, 68; Mr Victor Blank, chairman and chief executive, Charterhouse plc, 51; Lord Brabourne, television and film producer, 69; Mr David Constant, cricket umpire, 52; Mr Bryan Davies MP, 54; Miss Karen Dotrice, actress, 38; Mr George Duncan, chairman, ASW Holdings, 60; Sir Robin Gillett, underwriter and former Lord Mayor of London, 68; Mr Ronald Harwood, novelist and playwright, 59; Miss Katharine Hepburn, actress, 84; Mr Anthony Holland, solicitor and former President, Law Society, 55; Mr Alistair Horne, military historian, 68; Miss Hedy Lamarr, actress, 80; Mr Hugh Leonard, playwright, 67; Mr Roger McGough, poet, 56; Air Vice-Marshal Kenneth Nairn RCAF, chartered accountant, 95; Dame Kathleen Raven, former Chief Nursing Officer, DHSS, 83; Miss Stella Richman, television producer, 71; Mr Donald Trelford, former Editor, the *Observer*, 56; Viscount Weir, chairman, Weir Group, 60; Mr Tom Weiskopf, golfer, 51; Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, chairman, Next, 58.

Anniversaries

Births: Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev, playwright, 1818; Edward VII, King of England, 1841; Dr Herbert Thomas Kalmus, inventor of Technicolor, 1881; Anthony Asquith, film director and producer, 1902.

Deaths: William Camden, antiquarian and historian, 1623; Paul Sandby, water-colour painter, 1809; James Ramsay MacDonald, statesman, 1937; Arthur Neville Chamberlain, statesman, 1940; Dylan Marlais Thomas, poet, 1953; General Charles de Gaulle, statesman, 1970.

On this day: Moses Montefiore was the first Jew to be knighted in England, 1837; flogging in the British Army was abolished, 1859; the Cullinan diamond was presented to King Edward VII on his 66th birthday, 1907; the first woman mayor, Mrs Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, was elected at Aldeburgh, 1908; the death penalty for murder was abolished in Britain, 1965.

Today is the Feast Day of St Benignus or Benen, St Theodore the Recruit and St Vitonus or Vanne.

Lectures

British Museum: Nicole Douek, "Amenhotep III and his World", 1.15pm.

Gresham Lecture: Professor Peter G. Moore, "The Concept of Acceptable Risk", 5pm.

Royal Over-Seas League

Mr John Manthorpe, Chief Land Registrar and Chief Executive of HM Land Registry, was guest speaker of the Royal Over-Seas League at a meeting of the Discussion Circle held yesterday evening at Over-Seas House, St James's, London SW1. His subject was "Extending Land Ownership in the 20th Century". Mrs Mairi Radcliff presided.

Luncheons

Zaiwalla & Co

Mr Sarosh Zaiwalla, Senior Partner, Zaiwalla & Co, Solicitors, 95a Chancery Lane, London WC2, gave a luncheon yesterday at the Law Society, London WC2, in honour of Madam Ruhiyyih Rabbani, the last surviving member of the family of Bahaullah, the founder of the Baháí faith. Among those present were:

Sir John Cope MP, Paymaster General; Dr A.F.M. Yusuf, High Commissioner for Bangladesh; Lord Bruce of Donington; Mr Sinna Mani, Mayor of Lewisham; Mr Ajitabh Bachchan, Chairman, TV Asia; Mr Dalijit Sher, President, India Association UK; Mr V.W. Baker, South London Business Initiative; Mr Myron Belkind, Managing Director, Associated Press; Mr Quentin Letts; Mr David Loyd, Director, Kleinwort Benson; Mr D. Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive, Bank of Baroda, London; Mrs Anabel Loyd, Consortium of Street Children; Mr John Maycock, Westminster Law Society; Mr Michael Feld; Mr U. Patel, Manager, Bank of India, London; Mrs Kamal Sahgal, Chairman, Womans India Association UK; Ms Joyce Sampson, British Vice-Chairman, European Union of Women; Mr Michael Knowles; Dr Prem Sharma, Member, National Executive Committee, Conservative Party; Mrs Gilda Walker; Mrs Shamsi Navidi; Mr Hugh Adamson, Secretary General, NSA of Baháís of UK; Mr Stuart Poole-Robb; Mr Surendra Dempo; Mr Pankaj Vora; Mrs Surina Narula.

Receptions

Prime Minister

The Prime Minister, Mr John Major MP, was host at a reception held yesterday evening at 10 Downing Street, London SW1, in honour of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

High Sheriff of Greater London

Mr Anthony Everett, High Sheriff of Greater London, held a reception yesterday for the Judiciary of Greater London in Middle Temple Hall, London EC4.

The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor of Gosforth, and Lady Taylor, Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls, Sir Stephen Brown, President of the Family Division, and Lady Brown, Sir Donald Nicholls, Vice-Chancellor, and Lady Nicholls, and Mrs Jenny Bianco, Lord Mayor of Westminster were the guests of honour. Among others present were:

Lord and Lady Browne-Wilkinson; Lord and Lady Woolf; Lord and Lady Wigoder; Lord and Lady Irvine; Baroness Mallalieu and Mr Timothy Cassel; Lord and Lady Lloyd; Lord and Lady Slynn; Lord Justice McCowan; Lord Justice and Lady Neill; Lord Justice and Lady Hirst; Lord Justice and Lady Farquharson; Lord Justice and Lady Glidewell; Lord Justice and Lady Kennedy; Lord Justice and Lady Henry; Lord Justice and Lady Staughton; Sir Derek Spencer, Solicitor General, and Lady Spencer; Mr Justice and Lady Alliott; Mr Justice and Lady Laws; Mr Justice and Lady Brooke; Mr Justice and Lady Hidden; Mr Justice and Lady Otton; Mr Justice and Lady Blofeld; Mr Justice Mummery; Mr Justice and Lady Ferris; Mr Justice and Lady Millett; Mr Justice and Lady Vinelott; Judge Lawrence Verney, Recorder of London; Sir Thomas Legg; General Sir Brian and Lady Kenny; Rear-Admiral Sir Peter Anson and Lady Anson; Sir Hugh and Lady Dundas; Sir Patrick and Lady Sinclair; Sir Brian and Lady Hill; Sir David and Lady Hill-Wood; Sir Cyril and Lady Taylor; Mr Justice and Lady Garland.

Air League

Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon, Chief of the Air Staff, gave the 1993 Andrew Humphrey Memorial Lecture yesterday evening at the Air League, London W1. His subject was "The Royal Air Force, 75 Years On". Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Knight, Chairman of the Air League, received the guests at a reception earlier.

Athenaeum

The Right Rev Lord Coggan opened a discussion on the topic "Hope" at a talk dinner held yesterday evening at the Athenaeum, London SW1.

The Independent, November 9, 1993

Translations for the letter to Taherzadeh.

On page 5, third paragraph starting No, Mr. Taherzadeh…..Line 5 becomes

more in the realm of proof and testimony which, according to the Aghdas even applies at the level of revelation, when it states:

O concourse of divines! When My verses were sent down and My clear tokens were revealed. We found you behind the veils. This verily is a strange thing. You glory in My Name, yet ye recognised Me not at the time your Lord, the All-Merciful, appeared amongst you with ***proof and testimony (my emphasis).***

(Aghdas paragraph 165)

Also on page 5, eleven lines from the bottom of the page, line starting

Inspiration, proof and testimony and the full use of reason and intellect……

Should anyone wax angry with you, respond with gentleness; and should anyone upbraid you, forbear to upbraid him in return, but leave him to himself and put your trust in God the Just and Mighty Avenger.

(Aghdas paragraph 153)

In fact, I have found it a source of comfort to turn to the Aghdas as an antidote to the pain and sadness that the reading of your book produces.

Though it hurts very badly to know that we were not able to respond to the moving call of

Arise to further My Cause and to exalt My Word amongst men. We are with you at all times and shall strengthen you through the power of truth.

(Aghdas paragraph 38)

It is comforting to find that is followed by

Whoso hath recognized Me will arise and serve me with such determination that the powers of earth and heaven shall be unable to defeat his purpose.

(Aghdas para 38)

And even more heartening when it says

Arise ye **under all conditions (my emphasis)** *to render service to the Cause, for God will assuredly assist you through the power of His sovereignty which embraces both worlds.*

(ibid)

Service to the Cause can and does take many forms, both within the community and outside it. In the final analysis Baha'u'llah grants one and all the supreme assurance of saying

By My life, all that are on earth shall pass away, while good deeds alone shall endure. To the truth of My words God doth Himself bear witness.....Say the very life of all deeds is My good pleasure and all things depend on My acceptance.

(Aghdas para 36)

Each in our own ways, you in yours and I and the various members of my family in ours, have tried to respond to the ringing challenge of

By My life! He who has drunk the choicer wine of fairness from the hands of My bountiful favour will circle around My commandments that shine above horizons of creation. Do no think that We have revealed a mere code if laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice wine with the fingers of might and power.

(Aghdas para 4&5)

As Baha'u'llah told the kings of the world:

It is not our wish to lay hands on your kingdoms. Our mission is to possess the hearts
(Aghdas para 83)

This was a Cause that was not only divine but which was based on the statutes and ordinances of God

Keep ye to the statues and commandments of God
(Aghdas para 47)

You were enjoined to

Keep ye the statutes and commandments of God; nay, guard them as ye would your very eyes, and be not of those who suffer grievous loss.
(Aghdas para 147)

.And

Let there be naught in your demeanour of which sound and upright minds would disapprove and make not yourselves the playthings of the ignorant. Well is it with him who has adorned himself with the vesture of seemly conduct and a praiseworthy character. He is assuredly reckoned with those who aid their Lord through distinctive and outstanding deeds.
(Aghdas para 159)

Having turned to Him, it was to Him that you were answerable, for it was He

…who knew the inner secrets of the hearts and the meaning hidden in a mocker's wink.
(Aghdas para 157)

If you did wrong – and no human being is beyond wrong-doing - the Aghdas says that

To none is it permitted to seek absolution from another soul; let repentance be between yourselves and God. He, verily is the Pardoner, the Bounteous, the Gracious, the One who absolves the repentant.
(Aghdas para 31)

The framework is so clearly delineated, the guidelines so well set out. It is neither legalistic not complicated. It dealt primarily in the realm of the heart and it called for a reaction that resonated in the activities of everyday life and living – a holistic response worthy of the essential Divinity, Truth and Beauty of its appeal. And, if perforce you went wrong – and who can claim to be above such waywardness – even then God's mercy was infinite. Turn back to Him and find that

God hath laid hold on him who led you astray. Return to God, humble, submissive and lowly, verily He will put away from thee thy sins, for thy Lord, of a certainty is the Forgiving, the Mighty, the All-Merciful. This is the Council of God; would that thou might heed it. This is the Bounty of God; would that thou might receive it. This is the Utterance of God; if only thou would apprehend it. This is the Treasure of God; if only thou could understand!

(Aghdas para 184)

The joy, the hope, the elation that the reading of the Kitabeh Aghdas produces is palpable and real. The certainty of infallibility and willing obedience flow naturally from those inspired words. They are neither forced nor enforced.

Therein lies their power.

Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid

English translations added April 2012

English translations from The Kitab-I-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book
Bahai Publishing Trust
London
1993 Edition of the Universal House of Justice

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An **Introduction** to and quick **translation** of a letter written by RUHI Mohsen AFNAN to the Baha'i Spiritual Assembly of Iran in 1349 (1970) in Tehran, after reading The Priceless Pearl by Ruhiyyih Rabbani. The letter was not actually sent at the time.

Introduction

Ruhi Afnan was the son of Abdul Baha's daughter, Touba Khanum and Mohsen Afnan, a member of the Bab's family.

In 1969 Ruhiyyih Rabbani, née Mary Maxwell, widow of the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, Shoghi Effendi, published her book *The Priceless Pearl*, regarding her late husband. Ruhi Afnan, a first cousin of the Guardian, a long-time and close friend of Shoghi Effendi, had many things in common with him. They shared Abdul Baha as a grandfather. They both had Afnans for fathers, their mothers were sisters and they had both been born into, grew up in and were nurtured by the legacy of Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i Faith in the family and household of Abdul Baha. When Shoghi Effendi found out that Abdul Baha had appointed him as the Guardian of the Cause, the shock and unexpected weight of the responsibility placed on his young shoulders caused him eventually to leave Haifa and spend almost a year in Europe. Ruhi was his companion, fellow traveller and secretarial aid. Close in age, (Shoghi Effendi was two years older) both were dedicated to the service of the Cause and furthering its spread and its message. Ruhi twice went to the US and Canada to preach the Cause and for years served Shoghi Effendi as secretary and in a variety of other capacities.

Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Cause, saw fit to 'cast out' Ruhi Afnan from the Cause about 1937. For years, like other 'cast out' members of the family, he had not uttered a word regarding the whole tragic history that had ensued.

In 1970, living in Tehran, he read *The Priceless Pearl*. In his opinion, the ideas, conceptions, interpretations and judgements passed by Ruhiyyih Khanum in that book – relating to the Faith and its underlying essential principles and beliefs, or to the various members of the family – were not in accordance with the basic tenets of the Cause that the Bab, Baha'u'llah and Abdul Baha had lived, taught, suffered and died for. That was when he decided to break his decades of silence and wrote the ensuing letter to the Spiritual Assembly in Tehran. For some reason, he refrained from sending it.

Now, over four decades later, it seems appropriate to publish it, for the simple reason that there are so many events, decisions and judgements that have been made in the past, and stated in that book, which, in the opinion of Ruhi Afnan, who was very close to the Cause, well versed in its ideas, principles and history and who sincerely loved and cared for its fate, deemed it necessary to clarify many things expressed in that book and to steer matters back to their original course.

Doubtless there will be those who disagree. After all, the book was written by a lady who shared Shoghi Effendi's life for 20 years; to whom he had given the title of Amatul Baha (bondmaid/handmaid of Baha); appointed her as a Hand of the Cause and whom he considered his 'shield' at difficult times of his life, (see back cover of *The Priceless Pearl*, 2nd edition, 2000). After him, and for over 40 years, she brooked no opposition and unopposed by any family 'out cast', drew her own conclusions regarding the Cause, its principles and the priceless pearl, its Guardian. It remains for readers to draw their own conclusions. History is best served when all facts, events, interpretations, decisions and conclusions are aired and placed in the public domain. None of the thirteen grandchildren of Abdul Baha, of whom only one remains alive today, (2013) were ever approached by Baha'i historians, researchers, fact finders or just curious human beings, to ask, question, find out why, after the Master, matters moved the way they did. Ruhi Afnan throws some light on that area of one-sided darkness.

Bahiyeh Afnan Shahid

He starts his letter with reference to the case of Ne'matullah Falah – who had left Iran at the time of Baha'u'llah's exile and had finally settled in Iskenderun, Turkey, where he had become a successful businessman. He had been appointed Honorary Iranian Consul in that city, a post he had taken upon the explicit encouragement of the Master, Abdul Baha.

Upon his accession to the Guardianship Shoghi Effendi had considered that it would serve the Cause better if Baha'is refrained from all political activities. He therefore asked Falah to resign his post. This Falah refused to do, especially as he had a letter from the Master urging him to take the post. This resulted in the expulsion of Falah and his family from the Cause.

Passing through Iskenderun at a much later date, Ruhi Afnan met the members of the family and impressed by their lasting faith and commitment to the Cause, encouraged them to write to the House of Justice to seek a return to the community. Since the letter had to be written in English, Ruhi actually wrote it for them. Soon their request was granted and now the members of the Falah family are back in the Cause. One daughter, married to a Turkish diplomat, had remained out, fearing that difficult conditions would be placed in her way. Ruhi says that this had made him both angry and upset. However, he had been greatly relieved to hear that that she had been subsequently also accepted back in the community,

Ruhi Afnan adds that during the last thirty years, though he himself was deprived of serving the Cause, he had encouraged others who had been expelled to seek to return to the Cause and to fully participate in the membership of the community.

He ends this first section by [in his own words] 'making so bold' as to remind the members of the Spiritual Assembly that the placing of such conditions upon membership in the community are completely contrary to the revealed words of Baha'u'llah and the Bab and should not be permitted. The measure of Reality and Truth are only the prophets – unchanging and unchangeable. Everyone and everything in the phenomenal world, where things are capable of change, have the words of the divinely inspired prophets as their yardstick, not the words of persons and institutions of this world.

Ruhi Afnan quotes Baha'u'llah's comparison of divine manifestations (prophets) to the Sun of Reality or Truth, and the guardians to moons that obtain their light from that Sun and reflect it on humankind. In this revelation Baha'u'llah placed the Guardianship, together with the House of Justice in one twin institution, with the Guardian, who cannot be removed from office, as head of that institution. But Baha'u'llah adds that 'omooreh siyasiyeh' [usually understood as political matters, but here referring to civil and administrative affairs] are the domain of the Guardian and the members of the House of Justice, and matters of ‘ibadat’, worship and faith, to that which was revealed in the Book. This meant that the the legislative powers of these institutions were limited to ‘omooreh siyasiyeh’ and could not exceed that. Faith and belief, part of ‘ibadat’, are outside their domain.

Faith in the Sun of Truth

Religion, says Ruhi Afnan, is the manifestation (tajalli) of divine light or mercy that shines upon the reality of all things, including humanity’s intelligence. Faith is divine radiance. Human intelligence is the mirror in which that reflection occurs. Awareness of that divine radiance and dedication to that light are the proofs of faith. This is an internal and deeply personal feeling. Only those who have that awareness and are dedicated to that light can vouch for it. Confession and admitting to that are the only proofs of that faith. Abdul Baha, in his will, declared faith in the Bab and Baha’u’llah as the only requirements of being a Baha’i. No other requirements were mentioned. Ruhi Afnan quotes the Quran to that effect as well, where it is said that faith is an inner feeling and condition and is sufficient proof of belief. There is no mention of any ‘meezan’, or means of measurement, other than the intelligence of each individual believer to judge their own belief and faith. (Al Anfal 2).

Special mercies (rahmateh makhsouseh) of God’s Divine Being upon the Suns of Reality (the prophets)

In the Persian Bayan the direct relationship between human beings and the Sun of Reality has been clearly explained. Also, that God is Truth and what is other than God are his creatures who worship Him. The prophet is the complete manifestation of divinity. In essence, God and the Sun of Truth or the prophet are one and the same. The radiance of one is the radiance of the other. It is through them that God’s creation is nourished. For these divine names there is no first and no last, nor has there ever been, or in future shall ever be, any numbers. Meaning that these manifestations have always appeared and will go on doing so.

Widespread Mercy of the Sun of Reality upon Humankind

In the same section of the Bayan the Bab says that in the being of every created thing something of God exists – and has always existed, with which oneness with divine qualities can be achieved. Something that is perceived by God alone.

In a long paragraph (with extensive quotes from the Bab’s Bayan, the translation of which has not been here attempted) Ruhi Afnan explains that according to the Bayan, two realities exist in this world. One is the manifestation of the divine qualities and the other the ability to be a mirror that reflects these qualities. The first is superior to the second for if it did not exist, worship, which is the rising awareness of the reality that is above and beyond one’s self, would not occur. But understanding the existence of these two does not mean that there is a place for a third reality. For any third reality would be a creature of the creator, for there is nothing more than the realities of creator and created. Based on this Ruhi Afnan ascertains that guardians and houses of justice cannot constitute a third reality. Thus the primary duty of all created realities, no matter of what kind, be it guardian or religious organisation, is, each to the best of their abilities, to make that divine light that the creator shines on his creation their own, and reflect it back on their surroundings. For in the world of creation everything is headed towards wellbeing, improvement and an onward, upward march, leaving no place for a third 'reality' in the equation, for anything other than the first two is a creature. It therefore follows that neither guardianship nor houses of justice can form a third category. In fact, it is the primary duty of everything in creation, no matter who they may be, including guardians or religious organisations, having first absorbed that divine light which shines forth from the creator, to reflect that divine light, each to the best of their capacity, upon their surroundings. This does not permit for a third reality to appear between creator and created, as has happened in Christianity.

What is meant by Baha'ism

As such it means the radiance that shines from the manifestation or God's will on everything in creation, whether they are aware of it or not. As such it causes the nurturing, development, improvement and elevation of everything in creation. As such, Baha'ism is unlimited and has no borders. Faith is the acceptance of that divine radiance.

In this sense Baha'ism is the radiance of the divine qualities, not the appearance of the being of God. It is not a piece or a part of the being of God. Man's intellect and mind are not part of God's intellect and mind, to be the source of wisdom. They are creatures, not creators. Man's mind is not independent in essence, for it derives its radiance from a better and higher source. To shine brightly Baha'ism must ever seek light directly from the Manifestation. In his will, Baha'u'llah names the heads of the Baha'i Faith as 'guardians' whose duty it is to be caretakers and servers of the Cause, to further spread the aims of the religion. It should be kept in mind though that the guardians and safe keepers of the Cause are not representatives and spokesmen (wakeel), ministers (wazir), or equals (nazeer), or the divine manifestation (prophet), for the latter have divine power within them which they make manifest. Guardians and safe keepers only mirror the sun of reality (the prophet) and they must seek light from this source, since they themselves are not the source of that light and that radiance.

The Mirrors That Speak of the Sun of Reality (Marayayeh Mostahkieh az Shamseh Haquiqat)

Ruhi Afnan quotes Baha'u'llah's Tablet to Salman to answer the question regarding the position of the Sun of Reality and the mirroring of that divine radiance. He equivocally differentiates the station of the Sun of Reality that is the prophet, from the station of all other people who do no more than reflect the divinity existing in the prophet, adding that without the Sun of Reality there would be no mirrors to reflect anything. Ruhi Afnan goes on to quote Baha'u'llah to the effect that divine grace, as seen in the prophets, is something which like spring breezes, wafts over and encompasses everything in creation. He insists that Baha'u'llah was most emphatic that the Baha'i Faith was meant for **all** peoples and was absolute divine grace and mercy granted to everyone. It knew no boundaries and was the manifestation of divine light and radiance to everyone in the realm of creation. It has been freely granted without questions or requests, mysticism or certainty. Some would recognise and realise its value; and some would remain in ignorance. The idea is not to differentiate Baha'is from others – this Baha'u'llah forbids. It encompasses all the people of the world. Baha'ism is not a religion among other religions, as some people conceive it. It is world encompassing divine mercy, a will and desire based on sure foundations, unlimited and unconditional. Anyone who makes the membership conditional removes himself from the world of creation and will be committing an error. As such it cannot remain absolute (motlaq) to be the measure (meezan) of Reality and the test of human conduct. Faith and certainty are the realisation and belief in that outpouring of divine mercy. It is an inner, psychological state. No one save the Manifestation can measure and test that faith and belief. If one day a person or an institution creates any conditions regarding adherence to the Faith it will change the course of God's mercy so freely given to one and all by turning Baha'ism into a party or a community or a mystic path. Divine Reality, which is absolute and eternal, will become the prisoner of a world of change and alteration, confined by human understanding and error. God's infallibility is lost and made subject to human judgement.

A believer's faith and belief will become dependent upon another's acceptance, someone who is another member of the human community and is not a fitting judge. The presence of conditions turns the general, unrestricted character of the religion upside down. It will make love something to be forced, certainty subject to fear, knowledge dependent on personal interest and freedom subject to outward conformity. A divine faith thus becomes an institution devoid of spirit.

Baha'u'llah goes on to explain that at the time of the Bab the same situation pertained. The ulamas of the time considered themselves the judges of people's faith, condemning and killing innocent believers.

Guardians (owliya) of the Faith and members of the House of Justice

Judging by a prayer in which Baha'u'llah mentions the 'owliya' (guardians) who have not allowed worldly thing to detract them from turning to God, Ruhi Afnan concludes that 'owliya' were ordinary people – the same status that the Bab gave to Ali ibn Abi Taleb, the Prince of Believers, 'Ameer al Mo'meneen', for he believed that the latter had been created by the 'word' of the prophet and therefore did not participate in the divine being of the prophet. He was born a 'normal' creature like other men.

This is a purely speculative discussion, since neither Abdul Baha nor Shoghi Effendi saw themselves as sharing in the essentially divine manifestation that the Bab and Baha'u'llah enjoyed. They were mirrors reflecting the Sun of Reality. They both saw their duty as availing themselves of the divine light provided by the Bab and Baha'u'llah and spreading it among the people of the world. Ruhi Afnan uses the example of one of the prayers (munajats) of Abdul Baha where he says:

> '. . . we are all sinners and You the teacher and guide. We are full of shortcomings and You who see and expose them. Do not record the sins of these sinners in Your tablet . . . forgive these wrongdoings . . . for forgiveness is a noble quality . . . and You are the merciful and the forgiving, . . . '

This type of munajat, of which there are many, and the poetry that Abdul Baha wrote after the passing away of Baha'u'llah; the very name of Abdul Baha (the servant of

Baha'u'llah) that he chose for himself; all the letters that he signed with his initials of 'ein ein' (A A) that stood for Abdul Baha Abbas; and the tone and format of his correspondence, all of which showed that he was ever searching for inspiration, guidance, light and mercy from God and the Sun of Reality to spread among the people of the world. This made Abdul Baha the highest and most accomplished of 'mirrors' in the world.

Above and beyond that, there was his insistence and attachment to meetings where prayers were chanted and the efforts he made to instil this custom in all the members of the community. Every day, early in the morning, the members of the family and particularly the children were awakened, and in the parlour where tea was served, he would ask one of the ladies of the household to chant some prayers or tablets. Just as every evening, with those friends who were present, he would spend one or two hours asking those who were good at chanting the prayers to do so. Or he himself would talk about the Cause. explaining and clarifying its principles and talking about its history. I remember being awakened in the middle of the night by the voice of the Master, Abdul Baha, pacing, alone and in the dark, in the central hall of the house, chanting prayers and making supplications. Just one more sign of the heavy burden that Abdul Baha had to bear and his need for help from the Sun of Reality without whose help and sustenance things would not have moved forward. And since Abdul Baha was the well polished mirror of the Sun of Reality, Bahau'llah cast his radiance in his heart, seeing that he saw nothing but his own light in that heart. However, it cannot be said that Abdul Baha was a third 'reality' between the Sun of Reality and the world. The Bab had declared that between God and his creation there cannot be a third, for that third is part of the created world.

There is no doubt that at the time when Shoghi Effendi was in the service of the Master and recorded the prayers of Abdul Baha or translated them and at times, committed them to memory, he was fully aware of this principle. He knew that Abdul Baha never considered himself a participator or partner in the divinity of the Sun of Reality. This he applied to himself as well, never making any claims to infallibility as he knew full well that any phenomenal reality is subject to error. In the many years that I had the honour of being Shoghi Effendi's secretary, I neither heard him say or write anything to that effect. In his own words, quoted in *The Priceless Pearl* (p. 298) he says that Abdul Baha made him 'the responsible interpreter' of the holy writings and responsible for the laws of God, activities to which he diligently applied himself, as well as having 'laboured to expound' and to 'establish . . . in accordance with the explicit instructions written by Abdul Baha in His Will' the Assemblies, all in strict accordance with the clear teachings of Abdul Baha, his source of true sustenance and help, for it was he who had wanted him to undertake the building of these august structures of the Faith. These are the words of Shoghi Effendi himself, and are the frank and clear statement of his position in the shade and shadow of the great infallibility, just as Abdul Baha was in the shade and shadow of that same infallibility, the Sun of Reality, Baha'u'llah. This is compatible with the principle of 'mirroring' just as it is with the world of phenomenon. Undoubtedly the guardianship of the Faith reverted to him. However, guardianship and responsibility are twins and the person who is responsible is capable of error. Otherwise he would be free of any cares. A guardian is ever afraid that he might make a mistake that causes harm to another party. It was the realisation of these dangers that made Abdul Baha write the munajats (prayers or supplications) that he did. It is these sentiments and feelings that must be looked for in Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Faith and not the bestowal of infallibility, as is claimed in *The Priceless Pearl*, chapter xvi A Unique Ministry,(p 436), where it is stated that:

> The Master's grandson had been sublimed[1] by the forces released in His Testament into the Guardian of the Faith; belonging to the sovereign caste of his divine Forefathers, he was himself a sovereign. To the primacy conferred by ties of consanguinity had been added the powers of infallible guidance with which the operation of God's Covenant had invested him. Shoghi Effendi's divine and indefeasible[2] right to assume the helm of the Cause of God had been fully vindicated through thirty six years of unremitting, heart-breaking toil.

Bestowed infallibility means becoming a complete representation of the original, someone who epitomises him who is considered infallible in the first instance – that is Baha'u'llah, the Sun of Reality. And if any mistakes are made by him then that mistake reverts to the original person bestowing that representation. That is a concept rejected by Baha'u'llah. A guardian is not infallible. Infallibility must be required from a legal representative (wakeel), a minister (vazir), or a manifestation (mazhar), as they are in essence one with the original reality.

Secondly, infallibility is a quality of the Creator as that is the source of the being and the reality of the creature, having given him whatever shape or form He wishes. The Creator is also the measure of all the righteousness and truth of that being. You should not ask for whys and wherefores from the Creator, nor is He open to interpretations and explanations. Infallibility is a characteristic of the Sun of Reality and divine Will, not a characteristic of the mirrors that speak of them, as Baha'u'llah has clearly stated.

We said that the Master, Abdul Baha can be considered a model of human religiosity and morality. Religiosity and morality depend on two foundations: knowledge and freedom to choose that which is best. Without these two bases it is not possible to have a religious and moral life. Freedom gives value to choice. Anyone who lacks this freedom is forced to become an instrument whose actions have no moral value. The possibility of making mistakes made a model of Abdul Baha. If there was no possibility of error in what he said or did he would not have been a model to the world. Nor would his existence have produced anything good. Thus the term infallibility, in all its meanings mentioned in *The Priceless Pearl* (page 436) with reference to Shoghi Effendi, is out of place, unless we say that he was the Sun of Reality and a manifestation of God's will. This was something he never claimed.

Secondly, Shoghi Effendi says that Abdul Baha designated him as the 'interpreter of God's tablets'. We have seen that Baha'u'llah considered this as one of the complete prerogatives of the Sun of Reality and the manifestation of the Primal Will, the creator of all things. Adding that none but that manifestation can arrive at the pearls hidden at the bottom of that great sea and understand them as they deserve to be understood, for he is the real interpreter of the secrets and the destiny therein concealed. The meaning of these words is that the interpretation of the mirrors cannot be superior to that of the manifestation. Yes, the mirrors interpret, each according to his ability and station, but essentially they are of this created world as is their knowledge and understanding. To the extent that the heart of the mirrors are purified and clarified, to that extent will the divine light be reflected therein. This is what Shoghi Effendi meant when he said that the Master, Abdul Baha, appointed him as the interpreter of the writings and made him responsible for the laws of God. Abdul Baha himself had been given those prerogatives by Baha'u'llah, the manifestation of the Primal Will and the repository of divine inspiration.

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[1] [The Oxford Dictionary says that 'sublimed' used as a verb is used in chemistry (with reference to a solid substance) which changes directly into vapour when heated, typically forming a solid deposit again on cooling]. Maybe 'was made sublime' was what was meant.

[2] Indefeasible refers to a state or right that cannot be defeated, revoked or made void.

The Meaning of 'Being in the Shade of the Great Infallibility'.

Infallibility is not a quality that can be attributed to ordinary people since they cannot be equals or similar to, or representatives of the Sun of Reality, as is done in the Catholic Church. Infallibility, like all other divine qualities, is a ray that shines from the Sun of Reality, which like the rays of the sun, shine upon the mirror of the human heart – on condition that the mirror of the heart is burnished and cleansed from impurities – and always open. As Baha'u'llah says in a prayer, 'worldly matters did not deter them from giving all they had in the hopes of attaining to what You have'. Infallibility, as the Bab also says, belongs to the Sun of Reality and not to any mirrors that speak of that Sun. And if it is not in the mirrors, the slightest deviation from that radiance, deprives them of its light. This is a principle that Baha'u'llah clearly stated in the tablet of the Sun of Reality. He knew that the sun of divine grace and bounty shines equally upon all the mirrors in creation. Some though, grasp it in such a way that the Sun of Reality sees his own face reflected back at him, and he therefore describes these mirrors in his own unlimited manner, which in actual fact are descriptions of himself.

In his will Abdul Baha says that the Guardian is in the 'shade of the great infallibility'. What do these words mean? It does not mean that that person or institution has complete authority to lay plans that are carried out without any questions asked. Such an interpretation would place that person or institution in the position of being the official deputy (wakeel), or a representative (mandoob), or an equal (nazeer) of the Sun of Reality. As has been seen, there is no such thing as the official deputy or equal of that Sun in the created world. That person or organisation is a guardian (wali) or a faithful and trustworthy (ameen) person and group in whose hands a very valuable trust has been placed for him and for them to safeguard and nurture. Being in the 'shade of the great infallibility' means that that person or institution should, indeed like a mirror, derive rays and radiance from the Sun of Reality, meaning that they should consider that the source of radiance and intellectual impetus that is named divine wisdom is that celestial inspiration that descends upon prophets and is expressed in holy writ. Being in the shade of the great infallibility means that that person or institution seriously, like a mirror, should seek to find and reflect the radiance of the Sun of Reality. Their intellectual efforts should be aimed at setting up a system of rules and regulations that bring about the advancement of those principles. The source of this radiance and the intellectual activity which they call divine wisdom is the same as the celestial inspiration that descends upon prophets and messengers of God and is expressed in holy writ. They are both the creators and the measure (meezan) of reality. The sources of human thought and culture derives from them. For example, if the Sun of Reality has said 'associate with all religions in spirit and in joy', the Guardian or the House of Justice cannot enforce laws that forbid that or disrupt it. Or, as has been shown, the Sun of Reality states that membership in the Faith must not be conditional, the House of Justice or the Guardian cannot lay down conditions and thus reduce the universality of the Baha'i Faith. Any rules and regulations should serve to complete and make more accessible and widespread these basic principles. For one is divine wisdom and the other the product of human thought. One is absolute reality and the other human deduction. One the inspiration of the Sun of Reality and the other the conclusions of mirrors that are capable of error. One the Creator of all, and the other a limited creature. One the creative source of all truth, and the other dependent upon it. The word of the Creator supersedes, is superior and governs the word of the creature. The guardian and the members of the House of Justice are special people who in speech and action find nothing better than the religion of the Sun of Reality. Maybe they are of constant assistance to him.

The Necessity of Belief in the Sun of Reality

At the start of the Kitabeh Aqdas Baha'u'llah states that:

> 'The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the dayspring of His revelation and the fountain of His laws, Who represents the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Whoever achieves this duty has attained unto all good; and whoever is deprived of that has gone astray though he be the author of every righteous deed.'

The person who is 'the dayspring of His revelation' is that Sun of Reality who is the creator of the world and source of the spiritual, intellectual and cultural condition of humanity. This is the source of creative inspiration and everything else is but His creation. It is the source of the revelation and radiance upon which all others depend. One is the appearance of utter Truth and the measure (meezan) of the existence and perfection of things, and the other dependent upon it.

The Guardian of the Faith of God, like Ali Ibn Abu Taleb and Abdul Baha, are clear mirrors that reflect the rays of that revelation upon humanity. However, no matter how clear and shining they may be, they themselves are not the Sun of Reality. They are not self subsistent (qua'em beh nafsihi). Baha'u'llah sates that like the moon that appears after the setting of the sun, it depends on the latter for its light, which it then casts upon the world. That moon, however, never becomes the sun. Since the Sun of Reality is the manifestation of the divine in the world, knowing Him and believing in his religion becomes the source of human spirituality, thought and culture. That is why knowledge of, acceptance of that source of inspiration and belief in His mission is the first step in the salvation of humanity.

The Eternal Youth

In this section Ruhi Afnan enumerates the various promises made by Isaiah regarding the return of the Jews to the Holy Land led by and governed by a young man who will establish peace and security in the world. He would be almighty God, the eternal father, and the prince of peace (Isaiah 6-9). He further adds that God, or 'rabb' shall be your guide (21-52). Zoroaster too, spoke of the day of the Lord when Ahura Mazda shall appear and bring about a great renaissance. Christians equated this renaissance with the coming of Christ. However, what Isaiah foretold did not occur. They therefore went on waiting for the next manifestation. In the meantime Islam appeared and in the sura of

Al Naba' (The Great News) it is stated that those who ask about the great news, and about which they disagree, shall soon know. The Bab, in the Bayan, states that wherever the mention of 'rabb' appears in the holy books it refers to Him whom God shall make manifest. Baha'u'llah, in the tablet of Al Haykal, addressing the Pope, states that the 'father' that Isaiah spoke of has come and his promise has been fulfilled. In one of his poems Baha'u'llah refers to himself as the Eternal Youth that has arrived – a phrase repeated many times and which he equates with the Youth mentioned in Isaiah.

In the tablet of Al Haykal Baha'u'llah says that God has adorned the Youth with His likeness and granted him His Word with which to rule as he wills and as he sees fit, meaning that God's will shall be the fountainhead of the creative energies that will give rise to the new civilisation. He then states that this Youth shall, with God's permission, appoint 'mirrors that shall speak of his greatness and power' and shall make manifest his qualities to the people of the world. He goes on to add that God has made him the source of light for the mirrors, and their guiding light. He further adds that they should not be deceived by their position and forget to prostrate themselves before their dear and beauteous God. 'Say' he continues, addressing the 'mirrors' 'you have been created at my command and my will, so beware from turning away from the verses of God and thus be of those that cause suffering, and are the losers'. To this he adds that instead of clinging to what they possess and be engrossed in the enhancement of their positions and their names, God wills them to forgo what is both in heaven and on earth.

As that Spirit of God, the Eternal Youth, the Heavenly Father, and the Prince of Peace and Reconciliation appears in that renaissance and as one that does what he wills and rules as he wishes – meaning that the Primal Will is the fountainhead and lawgiver of a new civilisation – then he sheds His radiance upon the mirrors that speak of Him and makes them shine. The mirrors, however, must purify themselves from worldly matters and should not be deceived by their outward power and position and do things that are not worthy of them and their good name.

In *The Priceless Pearl*, on its second page, Ruhiyyih Khanum tries to establish that Shoghi Effendi was that child mentioned in Isaiah, who, after the passing of Abdul Baha would take over the reins of power and would guide the believers.

Ruhi Afnan states that this is all based on hearsay, and that in Baha'ism hearsay is not acceptable. The writer of *The Priceless Pearl* accuses Ahmad Sohrab of having made that mistake, and that it had caused his expulsion from the Cause. Then she proceeds to do it herself, for most of her book is based upon hearsay, recollections, stories and incidents relating to herself or others. This he considers null and void, especially regarding this subject and in view of the clear and specific writings of Baha'u'llah.

Secondly, the words 'after the covenant' had been added to the text (used for the argument) and do not appear in Isaiah, thus completely changing the meaning of 'child'.

Thirdly, Isaiah also calls that 'child' or 'youth' and 'son' Almighty God, Everlasting Father and King of Peace and love. This means that he is the one who lays the foundations and laws of that world encompassing civilisation. Nor can 'youth' and 'son' be given bodily, physical characteristics, as the writer of *The Priceless Pearl* does. Almighty God and everlasting father are purely spiritual and divine realities – 'neither born of, nor giving birth to' (as the Quran says). Ascribing these characteristics to Shoghi Effendi places him at the level of the Sun of Reality like the Bab and Baha'u'llah, whereas he was, like the Master, Abdul Baha one of the 'mirrors' that reflected the radiance of the prophets upon humankind. He was born of the word of the Sun of Reality and derived grace from that source.

Fourthly, all through the times that I spent in the service of Shoghi Effendi I do not recall that he, either in speech or in writing, ever considered himself as that ‘child’ or on the level of the Sun of Reality. He never considered calling himself ‘almighty God’ or ‘eternal father’, or ‘king of love and reconciliation’, or the fountainhead and builder of a new civilisation. In the same way, when Abdul Baha, in answer to a question, said that the triumph of the Cause of God is in His hands, he was referring to the eternal spirit of Baha’u’llah which ever shines its radiance upon the ‘mirrors’. It was that reflected radiance that granted Shoghi Effendi renewed life and designated him as the Ghosneh Momtaz (The Most Excellent Branch). I think that these exaggerations in *The Priceless Pearl* would make Shoghi Effendi’s soul most uneasy.

Belief in Divine Inspiration made Manifest is the only thing that differentiates between a Baha’i and a non-Baha’i

Total belief is both knowing and acting in accordance with that knowledge. The difference between inanimate bodies, vegetation, or animals and a human believer is that a believer is one who has first become aware of the radiance of the Sun of Reality and then is so inspired by it that he actually reflects it. For example, belief in the Bab and Baha’u’llah as the sources of divine inspiration and of all good is not enough for one’s salvation unless it is accompanied by a clear and obvious knowledge of those sources and their words bringing about a new way of understanding things and a new way of acting upon things. Such belief creates a new spiritual, intellectual and cultural life that favourably affects their lives and ennobles their speech and their actions.

In his will Abdul Baha made such a faith the thing that differentiates a Baha’i from a non-Baha’i and makes the admission of the individual believer the proof of that faith and belief. Even the acceptance of the guardian is not placed on the same level – for that acceptance is regarded as the outcome of that faith. Guardianship is simply being the mirror that speaks of the Sun of Reality and is a creature that belongs to the world of creation. He is not self-subsistent and an ultimate reality to become the ‘balance’ in which belief is weighed.

To commit serious sin is to deviate from the Sun of Reality and deny his being a divine manifestation. The sin committed by Azal was that when Baha’u’llah declared his mission he did not differentiate between the Sun of Reality and the mirror that spoke of it. He denied the former and clung to his position as a mirror. And having distanced himself from the source of divine spirituality he lost all worthiness. The fact that he was a brother of Baha’u’llah had nothing to do with the matter. The same applied to the covenant breaking of the brothers of Abdul Baha. After the passing of Baha’u’llah they set their sights upon a worldly inheritance and not upon the desire of their Creator who had placed the guardianship in the hands of Abdul Baha. With this refusal of the will and the position of Abdul Baha, they were deprived of divine light and suffered for it.

The Tablet of Baha’u’llah regarding the future of his sons and their future. [extracts]

> He expected his sons to follow God’s laws and not to exceed what was stated in God’s book the Bayan, ordering them and others to do that which was good

> and to forbear from that which was evil. He wanted them to uphold what God had revealed in his sacred tablets and to steadfastly believe in Him whom God shall make Manifest on the day of judgement . . . and not to disagree and create conflict in that which God ordains. For they are the leaves and fruits of the trees of unity . . . they are God's glory amongst people and a mercy to the world . . . . From them God's breezes waft upon people . . . . They are the pen of God, his orders and his words amongst his creation . . . . They light up the world with His radiance and His verses appeared to those who accepted and complied with them . . . . Whoever harms them, he says, has harmed me and whoever turns against them has strayed from God's ways. You shall find those who shall belittle and blame and find fault without any proof or evidence. He continues, 'Say O people, they were God's proof amongst you. Beware of arguing against them or of killing them and of being of those that are unjust without even being aware of it . . . . We ask God to grant them success in obedience to Him and to bestow upon them that which pleases the heart and conscience of those who are ever headed towards God.'

One hundred years have passed, says Ruhi Afnan [who was writing in 1970], since the above tablet was written by Baha'u'llah . . . and as He said, some of His descendants, spent time in this world, and like mirrors were able to reflect God's divine qualities. Some profited from these divine qualities and others, captured by the allure of the world, did not. In every case, the true and ultimate test of their faith was, is, and shall always be, their faith in the Bab and Baha'u'llah. who in turn, shall be their true 'measure' and adjudicator.

The daughters of this Blessed Family and their being accused of being of little faith.

Since in his prayers Abdul Baha considered himself capable of error, his daughters did not regard themselves as being above sin and error. Especially at a time when their father, an ever kind and considerate advisor, had recently passed away. My late mother, in her will, for example, admits her shortcoming and begs God's forgiveness. This was a feeling shared by the Master's daughters. They belonged to the world of creation and were subject to error and sin, but it did not in any way shake their faith in the religion. Maybe the stronger one's faith and understanding is one becomes even more aware of one's own sins and is therefore even more penitent, standing in greater need of God's guidance. Ignorant is he who considers himself incapable of sin.

In *The Priceless Pearl* it is stated that the reasons for what is called the enmity of the family of Abdul Baha with regard to the Guardian Shoghi Effendi lay way back in the family history, dating to the refusal of Azal to accept Baha'u'llah. Following that pattern, the daughters of Abdul Baha rose against Shoghi Effendi. The book states that:

> 'The Covenant-breaking inside the family of Baha'u'llah was like a vine, it entwined the tree and strangled it. Wherever its tendrils reached out it plucked up what it wound itself about and destroyed that too. This is why so many of the minor relatives, the secretaries, the member of the community surrounding the Centre of the Cause, became involved in the periodic disaffections of

> various members of the family, and every time one of the diseased members was lopped off, some blinded sympathisers went too.' (p. 122)

Ruhi then mentions his mother's will in which she reiterates her firmly held belief and total acceptance of Baha'u'llah's will in nominating Abdul Baha as his successor, her allegiance to him and to Shoghi Effendi as Abdul Baha's successor.

Ruhi Afnan goes on to relate that while the family were at the Citadel in Acre, Haji Mirza Hassan Khurasani invited the sister and wife of the Master and his daughters to Cairo. Ruhi's mother, Tuba Khanum, stayed behind to be with her father, Abdul Baha. One day, when she unexpectedly enters his room she finds him engrossed in writing something. At first, her unexpected arrival disturbed him, but then he told her that times had become very difficult and it was not farfetched that something would befall him. This paper, he said, is my will. Shoghi Effendi is still a child, he said, but when he reaches maturity he will take matters in hand and will be a good guardian and source of confidence for you all. However, he asked her not to speak of the matter to anyone. Thus, for years she knew that it was the Master's will that Shoghi Effendi would succeed him. Ruhi adds that 'from my childhood she therefore brought me up upon this basis of complete acceptance of the Master's wishes.' The day when Shoghi Effendi threw me out of the Cause, he says, she very firmly told me that if the reason for that had been my lack of acceptance and full support of the Master's wishes she would have been the first person to throw me out of the house!

The opinion and faith that were stated in my mother's will were not restricted to her alone, he continues, it was the sincere and heartfelt belief of every member of the Master's family. It was on that basis that they raised their children. Contrary to what *The Priceless Pearl* states, none of them denied or refuted the Guardianship of Shoghi Effendi. The reason why they did not gather around Shoghi Effendi at the time of Abdul Baha's passing was because they were all students. By the time they were adults they soon found themselves out of the Cause, shunned by Baha'is. What is more, in his will, the Master does not state that they should remain in Haifa; rather, comparing them to the disciples of Jesus, he says that they should travel the world in the service the Cause. Service to the Guardian was the domain of the elected Hands of the Cause, not the Afnans and Aghsans (members of the families of the Bab and Baha'u'llah), unless they had been elected to perform those duties.

The sudden, unexpected death of the Master, the shock and anxiety that it produced in Shoghi Effendi affected my mother, Touba Khanum, very badly, causing her to become ill for the rest of her life. When Shoghi Effendi threw me, (Ruhi) out of the Cause and ordered me to leave Haifa she knew what the reasons were, and therefore did not denounce me. She too was therefore thrown out of the Cause together with her other two sons and daughter, saddled with the painful accusation of disobedience. They had not broken any covenant, nor had any such move ever proceeded from her. Out of the Cause, she remained, unwell and alone until her death. Her constant advice to me was that since I could not be of any service inside the Cause, I should not be the source of any harm or discord out of it. This, Ruhi affirms, had always been his way.

The ideal 'mirror' that speaks of the Sun of Reality and who 'instinctively' seems to exude diving spirituality and power in all that he said and did was Abdul Baha. That holy presence was the supreme example of human excellence. The standard he set was so high that after him it created a sense of unworthiness and shortcoming in everyone. It became a very difficult act to follow, especially for those who were in charge of the Cause – and in particular for Shoghi Effendi himself. Many a time I heard this from him. For example, his words, in a letter dated September 1924 (quoted on p. 72 of *The Priceless Pearl*) where he wrote

> 'I deplore the disturbing effect of my forced and repeated withdrawals from the field of service . . . my prolonged absence, my utter inaction, should not, however, be solely attributed to certain external manifestations of inharmony (sic), of discontent and disloyalty – however paralysing their effect has been upon the continuance of my work – but also to my own unworthiness and to my imperfections and frailties.' [In the Persian text it reads 'I do not see myself as worthy of this position and do not consider myself as capable of carrying out these duties.']

Ruhi Afnan sees three important points in these few words:

1. There were no 'external manifestations of dis-harmony, of discontent and disloyalty.'
2. 'paralysing effects . . . .'
3. 'my own unworthiness . . . .'

The first point needs no explanation. The statement is clear. Those who had assumed the task of running the affairs of the Cause were loyal people who desired nothing but the safekeeping of the Cause. Shoghi Effendi had complete confidence in the family of the Master, Abdul Baha to the extent that he could confidently leave for Europe where for almost one year; he and I were in Switzerland, I as his secretary – though there were no letters to attend to. We spent our days in reading and playing tennis . . . until one day Mr. Hippolyte Dreyfus arrived, sent by Zia Khanum, Shoghi Effendi's mother, to enquire about him and his health. Spending a day in the company of this good friend Shoghi Effendi heard that some Persian Baha'is were concerned about him and were looking for him. Disturbed by this news, a few days later we moved to Interlaken. The mountains were inviting and he took to mountaineering. I followed suit. After a time Zia Khanum herself came with Ghodsi Onsi, [a cousin whose father was the brother of the Master's wife Moneereh Khanum], and convinced him to return to Haifa.

This absence doubtless caused 'paralysis' in his work and caused distress to the members of the community. The real cause of this absence was, as he himself stated, that he considered himself unworthy of the position he had been propelled into. After Baha'u'llah the Master took over the affairs of the Cause as a mature, experienced adult. In the company of his father he had been through torture (shekanjeh), imprisonment (essarat), exile (darbedari), all forms of suffering (azab), in the service of the Cause, and was well honed and prepared for the many tasks he inherited. To all this must be added that he was an outstanding and well-known personality in the Baha'i world. Even before assuming the leadership bequeathed upon him, all fingers pointed in his direction. The Sun of Reality had set but the moon of the Master's guardianship 'was at the height of its radiance and luminosity'. There was no place for darkness between the two phases.

This, however, was not the case with Shoghi Effendi. He was yet but a crescent which needed time to attain full brilliance. The Master was not unaware of this. That is why, in his will, he stated that everyone should do his utmost best that 'the dust of despondency' should not cloud his luminous heart and mind until that young tree reaches maturity. The members of the family always had that admonition (sefaresh) in mind and did their utmost best to put it in effect. It was not in relation to a son or a member of the family. It was a matter of sustaining and strengthening the guardianship of the Cause – and like all worldly matters, 'dust' was not in short supply.

Before the passing of the Master, his youngest daughter, Monawar Khanum, was living in Port Said, where her husband, Ahmad Bey Yazdi had a business. After the Master passed away Zia Khanum, Shoghi Effendi's mother, requested him to fold up his business in Egypt and to come to Haifa to help and advise in matters relating to the Cause. Both husband and wife were proud to accept this suggestion and disposing of the business in Port Said, came to Haifa.

To perform their duties the family felt in need of assistance. The first person they thought of was Aziz'ullah Khan Bahador who during the lifetimes of Baha'u'llah and the Master had been very active in the service of the Cause, was well versed in these matters and had everyone's confidence. A paralysis of the hand had taken him back to Iran. The ladies of the family (wife, sister and daughters of the Master) asked him to return to Haifa, which he most willingly did. Once there he resumed the work he did during the Master's times and with the same dedication and sincerity, This continued until the disagreement with the government of Iran arose over the Baha'i Tarbiat school in Tehran. [Shoghi Effendi wanted the school to close on Sundays and be open on Fridays, something the government disagreed with]. Another matter was over the registration and elections to be held for the establishment of the spiritual assembly of Iran. On both these two matters Aziz'ullah Bahador disagreed with Shoghi Effendi, arguing that many Baha'is, for a variety of personal reasons, would be reluctant to register, thus not showing the correct number of Baha'is, which, in turn, would reflect badly on the Cause. With regard to the school he believed that in such matters it would be best to cooperated with the government. I also (says Ruhi Afnan) agreed with Aziz'ullah, but did not insist on my opinion, since I recognised that the responsibility lay in the hands of the Guardian. Aziz'ullah's insistence angered Shoghi Effendi and led to a separation of ways. However, his sincerity, strength of belief and faith in the Cause were never in question, nor was his loyalty to the Guardian ever doubted.

I remember how, after this incident, Shoghi Effendi wanted to take some reed pens with him on one of his trips to Europe. He gave me the reeds and asked me to take them to Aziz'ullah to sharpen and shape the tips. The latter was in the garden, and after shaping the tips, asked me to take the following lines from Hafez back to Shoghi Effendi:

> 'Ride gently camel driver[3] for my life's slowly sliding by, and that heart that
> I had, with my Beloved, is gliding by.'

A line that very well indicated Aziz'ullah's feelings, and I have no doubt that he took those deeply felt spiritual emotions to his grave.

At any rate, the three daughters of the Master, Zia Khanum, Rouha Khanum and Monawar Khanum served the Cause and Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Cause, in utmost unity, sincerity and faith. In turn, Shoghi Effendi had the utmost confidence in them, which was why he could spend so much of his time in Switzerland, with me or Ghodsi Effendi as his chosen companions.

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[3] camel driver being the leader of the caravan

When Baha'u'llah declared his mission, Yahya Azal declared his enmity. In the same way, after the reading of the will of Baha'u'llah, the covenant breakers declared their opposition and enmity to the Master. However, after the passing of Abdul Baha no member of his family rose to dispute Shoghi Effendi's right to the Guardianship. No one rose in opposition to the will of the Master. Every member of the family, each to the best of their capacity, tried to serve the Cause. This they continued to do until Shoghi Effendi was slowly able to take matters into his own hands. I, for example, from the time of the passing away of the Master in 1921 and until 1937, had Shoghi Effendi's utmost confidence in my faith and sincerity, even though we were very different in character and personality. He was quick and bright. I was much slower. He was a perfectionist and particular. I was much more easy going. We often disagreed over things but he never had cause to doubt my sincere loyalty to the Faith and to his Guardianship. After my return from my second trip to America – that is a couple of months before my expulsion – and without any suggestion on my part, he told me that if I wished, during the summer, when he was away in Europe, I could go on a tour to spread the Cause. If he doubted my faith and my complete sincerity he would not have made such a proposal. Had I had any hidden resentment (hiqd), or enmity in my heart it would have appeared years before. This was how everyone in the family felt. No one was a traitor (kha'en) to him or to the Cause, nor was there any lack of total faith and acceptance of Shoghi Effendi's Guardianship. Even after Shoghi Effendi's death, there was no move made by any member of the family (by then all expelled from the Cause) to work against the unity of the Cause. My beliefs and convictions are clearly stated in the books that I have written.

In *The Priceless Pearl* it is stated that:

> 'Faith and obedience are the most important factors in one's relations to God, to his Manifestation and to the Head of the Faith. One must believe even if one does not see, and even if one does not believe, one must obey.' (p. 122)

In these few words the writer makes a difference between belief and obedience and gives prevalence to obedience. Is it really thus?

With reference to the Guardian of the Cause and the House of Justice, in his will, Abdul Baha says that whoever obeys them obeys God. There is no doubt obedience and submission are necessities in human society. It has undoubtedly been important in all religions. Without obedience to the heads of the Cause the unity of the Cause cannot be achieved. But it does not supersede faith. As was seen at the start of Kitabeh Aqdas, recognition of the Manifestation, meaning belief in the Sun of Reality, comes before everything else. First, with knowledge and faith a person turns his heart towards the Manifestation for divine radiance to be reflected upon it and make it shine and **then** obeys the laws and regulations laid down and lives according to them. What is more, Baha'u'llah himself, in the tablet of Heykal and the tablet of the Sun of Reality (lowheh shamseh haqiqat) and the tablet honouring Sheikh Salman, regards obedience as conditional. He very clearly states that the 'mirrors that speak of Him' should first relinquish worldly matters so that divine light might be shed upon them and then require obedience from others. All the political and social institutions of this world work according to this principle. Obedience to the laws and regulations of those institutions are required when they comply with the basic values and principles of the founders of those institutions. The words of the Sun of Reality are like a constitution which states the nature, intent and aim of civilisation, for at least a 1000 years. These are divine words and obedience to them is unquestionably required. The laws and regulations that the representatives draw up should be obeyed when derived from the constitution of a country. Otherwise they would be null and void and following them would be wrong. In such a case both the balance (meezan) and yardstick (miqyass) of these laws as well as those who enforce them derives from the consultative assembly and its members. If that is the case, then within a short time the true nature, intent and goal of the author of that constitution would be completely changed and soon forgotten. The unity and advance of that civilisation is dependent upon that. In all previous religions this principle has been clearly proven. Whenever religious leaders act in the service of their own position and set aside God's requirements and heavenly inspiration, only considering obedience and submission as proof of faith, that religion would be on a downward slide and slowly its spiritual value will diminished and disappear.

Reasons for Expulsions

Almost half a century [Ruhi Afnan was writing in 1969/70] has passed since the passing of Abdul Baha. What has happened? Many people have been expelled and most have remained out. Was that because they denied Baha'u'llah or questioned the positions of Abdul Baha and that of the Guardian? Or were there other reasons, relating to matters worldly, or of a personal nature?

As was stated at the start, I myself encouraged a group to seek a return to the Cause, which they succeeded to do, while I was an outcast. I myself never succeeded to be accepted back. If the reason was my lack of faith, I would never have succeeded in convincing others to seek a return to the Cause. The strong faith I saw in them goaded me on to continually encourage them to seek a return. It was such a pity to see such strong believers deprived of membership in God's community. And since their faith had remained unshaken, after their return they succeeded in rendering worthy service to the Cause.

In most cases the reasons for casting people out were 'worldly matters' which had nothing to do with their faith and sincerity to the Cause. For example, Ghodsi Effendi, [Ghodsi Onsi, whose father was Sayyid Agha Mirza Yahya Isphahani, the brother of Moneereh Khanum, the Master's wife, and whose mother was Khanum Afandi, the daughter of the King of the Martyrs and therefore the cousin of Shoghi Effendi's mother] who had drunk the milk of the same wet nurse as Shoghi Effendi, and who was his life-long friend and companion, was cast out for an unimportant matter that had nothing to do with his faith and sincerity. His story was as follows:

After the end of the 1st World War the Master had chosen Ghodsi Effendi to collect the mail by hand from the post office and to bring it to him. His remuneration for this service was a daily meeting with Abdul Baha. After the Master passed away, he continued to render this service to Shoghi Effendi. At one point a member of the family asked him to deliver his mail to him directly and not to take it to Shoghi Effendi first. This he found difficult to do, and consequently asked Shoghi Effendi to relieve him of this duty. Shoghi Effendi became very angry at the idea that his mail would not be brought to him daily and by hand. As a result he kicked out Ghodsi Effendi. But matters did not stop there. Agha Sayyed Mirza Yahya. Ghodsi's father, was also kicked out because he did not shun his son, and expressed the opinion that for such an unimportant matter his son did not deserve to be thrown out of the Cause. This reached the ears of Shoghi Effendi and made him still more angry. He considered it a protest against the prerogatives of his guardianship and as a result kicked out the father, mother, brother and sister of Ghodsi Effendi. Soon after Agha Sayyed Yahya died, as, in time, did is wife and two sons. His daughter, Khorsheed Khanum, (an intelligent, educated lady) was left alone and is now old and unwell, in Haifa.

[Translator's note: Ruhi Afnan did not live long enough to see the end of this story. Khorsheed Khanum was a good friend of Shoghi Effendi's cousin, Soyara Khanum Afnan, (Ruhi Afnan's sister), daughter of Touba Khanum, the Master's third daughter and Mirza Mohsen Afnan. They had grown up together and had both been students at the American School for Girls in Cairo. After her mother's death Soraya Khanum was also living alone in Haifa and Khorsheed Khanum often visited her. It was at one of these get-togethers that Soraya Khanum suggested to Khorsheed Khanum to try to return to the Cause, instead of suffering the loneliness and ill health of old age all by herself. Khorsheed said she would be willing to offer all she had (meaning her house at No. 11 Persian Street and another property in the German Colony) to the Cause and to return to the fold. She took up this matter with the lawyer of the Community, Mr. Weinshall, who relayed the message and brought back a positive answer. As a result, the Community provided someone to look after her at home, her house was refurbished, her garden put in order and at the end of her life she died in the warm embrace of the Cause and the covenant.]

The case of Zia Khanum

[She was the eldest daughter of the Master, the wife of Mirza Hadi Afnan Shirazi and the mother of Shoghi Effendi.]

None of the cases of those that had been cast out of the Cause and with whom I had spoken and tried to encourage to seek a return to the fold was, in my opinion, as important and as unfavourable to the welfare of the Cause and good name of the Guardianship as that of the distancing of Zia Khanum from the Community.

When, after 1948, the Iranian government arranged for the return to Haifa of its citizens who had taken refuge in Lebanon, Zia Khanum, [who was Ruhi's aunt] invited me and my son Parviz, to stay at their home, until such time as my apartment had been vacated by those who had occupied it. During this period most of our conversations concerned the Cause. One day I gathered enough courage to ask her why Shoghi Effendi had cast her out of the Cause as well, adding that one day history might say that I, Ruhi was kicked out due to jealousy on my part and that my mother, Touba Khanum had sided with me. Wrong as that assertion would be and no matter how devoid of truth, it would seem logical to some historians. Nor would that be such a blow to the good name of the Cause. But what will they have to say with reference to her case? How will they explain that? She answered that Shoghi Effendi never cast her out, as some people think. It was the treatment of his wife, Ruhiyyih Khanum and the servants of the household, who took their orders from her, that compelled her to leave the house and seek her distance. She went on to say that as the eldest daughter of the Master and the mother of Shoghi Effendi she had a position to maintain. She could not tolerate a situation where she was insulted and demeaned, and she illustrated that by recounting occasions when that had actually occurred. I answered by saying that that did not seem a good enough reason. After all, the good name of the Guardian was more important, adding that it might have been better to have borne the insults and unseemly treatment and kept it all a closed secret. I then made bold and asked about the cause of dispute between her and Ruhiyyih Khanum.

Causes of Dispute between Zia Khanum and Ruhiyyih Khanum

As has been stated above, in his will, the Master had said that every effort must be made that 'the dust of despondency' should not disturb Shoghi Effendi until 'the tree reaches maturity and becomes fruitful'. Twenty years after the passing away of the Master, when Shoghi Effendi had gradually taken matters into his own hands, the 'tree' was as yet not 'fruitful', in the sense that he had not yet married and had any children. Bahiyeh Khanum [The Master's sister] was greatly disturbed by this, but the marriage of Shoghi Effendi was the personal responsibility of his mother, Zia Khanum.

Mr. M. Mills was a close friend of Shoghi Effendi and as he also was the head of the Spiritual Assemblies of America, Shoghi Effendi very openly and frankly discussed and consulted with him regarding important matters pertaining to the Cause. So whenever Mr. Mills was in Haifa he stayed for a good while.

I believe it was the beginning of 1937 that Mr. Mills visited Haifa for the last time. Mrs Marjory Morton was in Haifa too. Every lunch time there would be long discussions with Shoghi Effendi, but in the evenings I would be at dinner with them. One evening I found Mr. Mills very disturbed and sorrowful, and excusing himself from dinner declared that he would be leaving Haifa the next day. I asked Mrs Morton what had happened, and she told me that Zia Khanum had asked to see them both and had sought their opinion regarding Shoghi Effendi's marriage. Mr. Mills had said that in the West that was a personal matter decided by the young people themselves and that other people had no right to interfere. Therefore whatever the Guardian's decision was would be accepted by everyone. However, when Zia Khanum mentioned the name of Mary Maxwell, neither of them considered it to be the right choice. When Shoghi Effendi heard that, he had become very angry. It was in view of that anger that Mr. Mills thought that his presence in Haifa was not appropriate any more.

During my first trip to America I was at Green Acres and Mrs. May Maxwell, the mother of Mary Maxwell [Ruhiyyih Khanum] told me a story about her daughter which, in the light of what happened later, clearly proved that the tears that were shed by her at her daughter's wedding to Shoghi Effendi were not tears of joy and pride, but maybe those of sadness, pain and shame in the eyes of God, – and fear for what later transpired, – as well as its effects on Shoghi Effendi and his Guardianship. However, in spite of this sadness and pain, she added, they could not refuse such an honour, nor could they speak of their disapproval of the marriage.

Again, during my second trip to the US, while in Washington as a guest of Mr. Charles Mason Remy, I was given another account of Ruhiyyih Khanum which showed that he too did not approve of this marriage.

When the news of the impending marriage became known, a lady called Mrs. Edma Balloura Belmont, who had met the Master in America and had become a Baha'i, and who, upon her return to the Middle East had become a good friend of the family, was in Beirut undergoing medical treatment. Upon hearing the news she told the ladies of the family that she had nursed Mary Maxwell and knew her medical history and that it was impossible for her to have children. Soon after Mrs Belmont died, but her words were proved to be true.

In short, many of those who knew Mary Maxwell well were unhappy about this marriage but did not dare to express their opinions. My mother, Touba Khanum and her sister, Rouha Khanum were in Beirut at the time and apparently far removed from the matter. They were not capable of doing anything and therefore remained silent. The responsibility rested completely with Zia Khanum. She, in turn could not verify Mrs. Edma Belmont's words and upon that basis, prove anything.

Time passed, and Ruhiyyih Khanum did not become pregnant.

Dr. Raf'at Bek, a Turkish, Baha'i gentleman, residing in Beirut, educated in Germany, and a gynaecologist by profession – he had been head of that department in the Turkish Medical School, – wrote to Shoghi Effendi, offering his services. Ruhiyyih Khanum refused to be examined by him. Dr. Raf'at Bek wrote again, suggesting that the problem may be with Shoghi Effendi himself. He recommended that he should eat strengthening food, including ten fresh eggs a day. Shoghi Effendi did not answer his letter, but asked his mother to provide him with such a diet. She obeyed. Time passed, but without any results. This was a source of anxiety for Zia Khanum, for too many eggs could cause other medical problems. She therefore asked Shoghi Effendi to relieve her of this duty and to ask Ruhiyyih Khanum to do it for him. This she refused to do, accusing Zia Khanum of not wanting her to get pregnant. This was the basis of the disagreement between the two parties and raised Shoghi Effendi's suspicions.

Some years later, in Beirut, I heard from Rouhanguise Khanum, Shoghi Effendi's eldest sister, that Shoghi Effendi finally convinced Ruhiyyih Khanum to see a doctor. In fact, two doctors saw her: Dr. Costero of the Italian Hospital in Haifa and Dr. Zondek, the gynaecologist of the Hebrew University and the Hadassa Hospital in Jerusalem. They both stated that because of a problem that existed she was unable to bear children.

At any rate, I remained a guest at Zia Khanum's home until my own apartment was vacated and I returned to it. Early one morning, Zia Khanum came to visit us. That was the first and last time that she honoured me with such a visit. She said that her intention was to bid farewell to my mother, her sister, because upon further consideration, she had concluded that my opinion was probably the better one and that she had decided to return to the Master's house (and Shoghi Effendi's residence), and spend the rest of her days, no matter how they turned out, near Shoghi Effendi. After bidding my mother and myself farewell she left to do just that. Later we heard that she had asked her sister, Monawar Khanum, who at the time resided at the Master's house, to deliver her request to Shoghi Effendi. When Ruhiyyih Khanum heard of this she presented Shoghi Effendi with an ultimatum, to the effect that 'if your mother returns I leave'. Shoghi Effendi thought it better to decide against his mother's return and thus refused her. But Ruhiyyih Khanum did not stop at that and told Shoghi Effendi that when his mother had arrived Monawar Khanum had received her with such affection and warmth that it proved that in her heart she had never cast out her sister. This only served to further complicate the situation and resulted in Shoghi Effendi expelling Monawar Khanum as well. From that day on, old, ill and alone, she lived at the Italian Hospital in Haifa.

Suitcase full of requests from members of the family seeking to return to the Cause.

For twelve years after Shoghi Effendi cast me out of the Cause I regularly wrote a petition – at least once a year – and more often than not, took them to the House myself. Several times I saw Ruhiyyih Khanum who would meet me and end up by rejecting my request. I always wondered whether Shoghi Effendi read those letters or not. One day I asked Zia Khanum. She told me that other than myself, many people wrote such petitions, for example Rouha Khanum [Zia Khanum's sister and Ruhi's aunt.] Apparently Shoghi Effendi had a special suitcase full of such letters from members of the family, all of which he saved. Zia Khanum added that she herself, every month, sometimes every week, would write such a petition and pour out her heart, in an effort to clarify matters to her son. I don't know whether that suitcase full of letters still exists. If it does, it would tell the story of those people and the pain they bore. Their expulsion was not due to lack of faith. The way they bore their pain and nevertheless persisted in their belief was good proof of that faith and belief. What they wanted, by all means, was to avoid a blow to the Cause or create problems for the Guardian that would bring the 'dust of despondency' upon him. The silence that the family maintained was proof of their faith and belief, not their lack of it. They did not want a repeat of the stories of the covenant breakers, and at all cost wanted to avoid another calamity afflicting the Faith. If I now briefly speak of all this it is because Ruhiyyih Khanum, in her book *The Priceless Pearl* has strayed from the truth, or, for personal reasons, has stated only a part of the truth; or has reinterpreted or misrepresented the truth in such a way as to advance her own arguments. Keeping silent about such matters would have been preferable. He who is innocent, however, does not fear the truth.

The real cause of the casting out of people, whether members of the family or other believers had absolutely no connection with what Azal or those who were unfaithful to the covenant of Baha'u'llah did or said – as is stated in *The Priceless Pearl* (p. 182). Zia Khanum was the mother of the Guardian of the Cause and the first lady of the Baha'i world. Whom would she be jealous of? Everyone looked up to her. Monawar Khanum had no children to want the Guardianship for her son. None of the daughters of the Master sought anything but service in the shelter of the Guardian of the Faith.

What Ruhiyyih Khanum says is based on her own beliefs and interpretations of affairs in the service of her own desired version of events. Being a Baha'i she did not measure by belief and faith in the Sun of Reality and the 'mirrors that spoke of Him'. The measure of belief for her was blind, unquestioning obedience. For it was only by such means that her plans could progress. Belief in the Sun of Reality required that Guardians first become 'a mirror that spoke of Him' and then demand obedience. The command (amr) of the Sun of Reality and the 'mirror that spoke of Him', meaning Abdul Baha, was that the position of the guardianship was safeguarded and passed on to Shoghi Effendi and his progeny. Ruhiyyih Khanum knew that she could not have any children and that due to her, that line would come to an end. In spite of that, and for the sake of position and power she said nothing about it and proceeded with the marriage and succeeded in bringing the line to an end. A sin greater that this was inconceivable. The power and position she wanted through enforced obedience she put above the wishes of the Sun of Reality.

On page 82 of her book Ruhiyyih Khanum writes:

> 'Baha'u'llah was the prophet .... The Master was the embodiment of His powers and teachings .... Then something else was needed; this is where ... a lot of people, including members of the Master's family and some of the Baha'is, have fallen down in their perspective of things. They wanted a second Abdul Baha – a series of patriarchal repeats in the form of the Guardian. But

God seems to have had another idea.'

Then Ruhiyyih Khanum proceeds with her own planning, though nothing is clarified and things still require explanations. This line of descendants that she disputes and denies is that which Abdul Baha clearly stated in his will. Shoghi Effendi was the interpreter of the Faith, and after him, his descendants – a matter that required him to marry and have children.

What is more, the idea of a chain of descendants was not created by Abdul Baha. As has been seen, it was an idea stated in the tablets of Baha'u'llah and among others, in the Baha'i daily prayer. Abdul Baha only applied that principle to Shoghi Effendi and his descendants. Baha'u'llah finds that this is true in all religions: The appearance of the Sun of Reality to be followed by 'the mirrors that speak of Him' and of the eternal truths expressed by all prophets. Human beings have not followed that route and have strayed from that path – which is why they have not arrived at unity. If the Guardianship in Islam had been maintained the diversity and divisions would not have occurred and the unity of the religion of God would have remained safe.

Lastly, he who has laid the rules and regulations is the Sun of Reality, namely Baha'u'llah himself, and not the ideas that Ruhiyyih Khanum came up with, which contradicted their true meanings. The correct explanation of these principles is the duty of the interpreter of God's verses, meaning the 'mirrors that speak of Him' and not the duty of Ruhiyyih Khanum or me. Actually what she sought to do was to give some sort of explanation for leaving the Faith without an interpreter and thus leaving the words of God at the mercy of various and contradictory interpretations.

Ruhiyyih Khanum mentions the Guardian's loneliness, his sense of having no one around him and the tears that that caused him to shed. In his will the Master states that the Afnans and the Aghsans [members of the Bab and Baha'u'llahs families] must be involved in matters concerning the Faith and remain close to Shoghi Effendi. He adds that like the disciples of Jesus they should also travel the world and, each in his own way, seek to spread the word. The Guardian should be surrounded and helped by the Hands of the Cause and the most prominent Baha'is of the world and the members of his family. The loneliness of Shoghi Effendi was not caused by the absence of people like me. It was caused by the fact that he had no children and grandchildren. Due to the absence of descendants to inherit the task left to him. There was no one to carry on the heritage. And the reason for it was the fact that Ruhiyyih Khanum could not have children. And if Shoghi Effendi's mother left it was because of the treatment she received at her hands. It was not destined by God. It was due to Ruhiyyih Khanum's behaviour. She accuses the daughters of the Master of wrongdoings and passes judgements regarding thing of which they were never guilty. From the beginning they all accepted, obeyed and served the wishes of the Master. Each one of them, in their ways and to the best of their abilities, tried to serve Shoghi Effendi. The spirit of Abdul Baha is maybe a witness to that. And after their death they must have received their just rewards. It is only right that judgement should not be passed without having all the facts available.

Zia Khanum and the Running of the Affairs of the Faith

Bahiyeh Khanum (the greatest holy leaf) the sister of the Master, was the personification of goodness, patience, love and kindness. No one knows this better than people like myself who grew up and were nurtured in the shelter of that loving care, always and everywhere, so generously given. After the passing of the Master, though, she was not in a condition, with regard to age and health, to take actual and complete charge of the affairs of the Cause. However, her caring, loving nature had gained for her a very special place in the hearts of the Baha'is. This was a spiritual asset that she offered and which served to safeguard the Cause and its unity. Her name, the love she engendered in everyone and the dedication and self-sacrifice with which her wishes were met, safeguarded the Cause during that dangerous period. At the time, the actual running of the Cause was in the hands of Zia Khanum. From the day of the passing of the Master and until 1937, while I was serving at the centre of the Faith, this was the case. At the start, while the Guardian spent most of his time in Europe, all the affairs of the Cause were under the supervision of and were run by Zia Khanum. However, year by year, this situation changed. The more Shoghi Effendi took matters into his own hands, the more Zia Khanum withdrew, happy and reassured to see him taking over and attending to his duties.

Though Zia Khanum, together with the other daughters of the Master, rendered their services to the Cause during that difficult early time, not one word appears in Ruhiyyih Khanum's book. All she has to say consists of blame, reproach and reprimand.

After the passing of Abdul Baha, whenever the suitable occasion arose and someone with sufficient knowledge in law and national constitutions was present, Shoghi Effendi would discuss the will of Abdul Baha, asking whether it had sufficient scope and value for the institutions of the Faith. Whoever read that will was amazed at its comprehensive scope and nature – thus far in theory only. But when it came to the implementation of those ideas, people wondered why they were never actually acted upon by the Master and what had been the obstacles to that end, especially as the condition of the Faith needed such institutions. I, personally, often heard this question asked by Shoghi Effendi at the time. Until one day the Guardian found a tablet among the papers of the Master in which he stated that had it been possible he would have established the House of Justice and would have accepted its decisions. One wonders why, during the years of his stewardship such an occasion had not arisen.

We know that in Acre, soon after the passing away of Baha'u'llah and as a result of submissions made by the covenant-breakers, a commission of inquiry was formed by the government to look into the affairs of the Faith. As a result of that, the conditions of imprisonment in the citadel became more difficult. At the same time, the Baha'is in Iran were under greater pressure. Under such circumstances the election of spiritual assemblies and the establishment of institutions was impossible. The Faith had neither national nor international presence. Nevertheless, in many places some people were enthusiastically and secretly practicing it. With the constitutional revolution in Turkey and the release of all political prisoners, Abdul Baha took the opportunity to visit Europe and America, thus spreading the Cause. During that earlier period of travel and preaching restrictions it was not possible to establish any institutions. In the West there were no people able to take such initiatives and establish institutions. Upon the Master's return to the Holy Land the First World War broke out and the road to both East and West were both completely closed. The Turkish government once more resumed pressure, interrogations and investigations. On the whole, from the time of the passing away of Baha'u'llah until the end of WW1 – that is until the writing of the above-mentioned tablet of Abdul Baha, he did not find a convenient or suitable period of time to set up the institutions that he had in mind. During this time, Shoghi Effendi, who had been appointed as the central figure in all these institutions, was still a student at university. Abdul Baha was awaiting his grandson's graduation to give the reins over to him.

Shoghi Effendi's departure for Oxford

In *The Priceless Pearl* Ruhiyyih Khanum says that Shoghi Effendi's going to Oxford University was the 'decision and wish' of Abdul Baha. This was not so. In July of 1918 Shoghi Effendi graduated from the American University of Beirut. Early in 1919 he decided that he wanted to continue his education in England. When he sought the permission of Abdul Baha his request was refused. Age had taken its toll and this was visible on Abdul Baha's tired face and form. Besides, there was no one to replace Shoghi Effendi. It was not at all as Ruhiyyih Khanum recounts it. I had not finished my studies as yet and was a sophomore at the AUB. My knowledge and experience were insufficient to be deserving of that position. Secondly, the Master had written his will and had chosen Shoghi Effendi as his heir. He wanted to personally familiarise and train him before gradually putting matters in his hands. There was no other person, including myself, who could replace Shoghi Effendi. The Master suggested that if the reason was to improve his English and facilitate his translation work, then ways could be found to do that in Haifa. Leaving for Oxford was not necessary.

Shoghi Effendi consulted Dr Youfi, the Master's personal physician. His opinion was that there was no special reason for concern regarding the Master's health, and that considering his age, he was in good health, and if he remained thus he might well live for another ten years. Shoghi Effendi took this doctor's opinion and insisted on going. Abdul Baha, however, did not give his permission until Mr. H. Dreyfus and his wife, Mrs. Laura Barney arrived in Haifa. Seeing the situation thus and Shoghi Effendi very nervous and upset, they urged Abdul Baha to give his consent. The Master finally agreed, but upon the condition that he should first go to the American Hospital in Neuilly, Paris, for a cure for his nerves. After Shoghi Effendi's departure, the Master sent for Aziz'ullah Khan Bahadur, to come to Haifa from Shiraz, and help him with writing and correspondence. In any case, the Master was not happy about the departure of Shoghi Effendi.

If, as it is maintained by Ruhiyyih Khanum in *The Priceless Pearl*, that Shoghi Effendi went as a result of the decision and with the consent of the Master, then the responsibility for the conditions and turbulence that pertained after his passing should be borne by him – for not thinking of what might happen after a sudden and unexpected death, which is, after all, part and parcel of human fate. The Master was a far-sighted man, but was not able to stop Shoghi Effendi from leaving for Oxford.

A few days before the Master passed away, Zia Khanum asked me, while busy with the correspondence, whether anything new had occurred, for the Master had requested that Shoghi Effendi be asked, by cable, to return to Haifa. I answered that nothing new had come about, adding that a few days before, the Master had given me a prayer book and had asked me to mark all the places where the subject of covenant breaking was mentioned, and to bring them to his attention. He then wrote a detailed tablet and in a very sorrowful and disconsolate way asked God to relieve him of the cares of this world. He also requested believers to remain faithful to the covenant. It never occurred to me that this pointed at his eminent departure.

Zia Khanum thought that there must be some problem that made him request the quick return of Shoghi Effendi. In a letter, the situation was explained to Shoghi Effendi and his early return insisted upon. The next day the Master enquired whether the cable had been sent. When Zia Khanum told him that instead a letter had been sent, the Master's response was that Shoghi Effendi would not be back in time to see him.

The guardianship that the Master designed for Shoghi Effendi did not envisage a period at Oxford which might leave a void in the period of transition and endanger the interests of the Cause. Had Shoghi Effendi remained at the side of the Master the transference from the Master to Shoghi Effendi would not have experienced the serious difficulties it did, and as he himself admits, created a 'paralysis' in the affairs of the Cause. Shoghi Effendi, faced with these heavy responsibilities, would not have been so shocked and bewildered. His departure from and distance from Haifa created problems that the Master wanted to avoid. These were matters that were clear to those who were aware of them at the time. Vis a vis Abdul Baha Shoghi Effendi felt ashamed that though he went to Oxford against his wishes, nevertheless he assigned the Cause into his hands. In those days Shoghi Effendi himself spoke of these matters and shed tears of regret and remorse over it. Abdul Baha was heartbroken. Zia Khanum did not want the Master to be further hurt by the possibility that Shoghi Effendi would not return. The outcome was that a heavy burden of responsibility fell upon her shoulders and those of the ladies of the household. All of which they bore, trying their utmost, – and succeeding – in steering matters to safety.

What does Ruhiyyih Khanum mean when she accuses the family of being covenant breakers? Covenant breaking is to renege on an agreement. It is the breach of a promise made between the Sun of Reality and his followers. It specifies that after the setting of that Sun people should turn to the moon of the guardianship to obtain radiance from him. This 'the ladies of the household' did at the most sensitive period in the history of the Cause, neither asking for, nor expecting any remuneration from anybody. However, they certainly did not expect insults and reproach. Baha'u'llah, in the prayer to be chanted at the shrine of the Bab asks for God's blessings upon the members of the families of both the Bab and Baha'u'llah and safety and security from the attack of enemies and the unjust, as long as godly characteristics and God's good names are seen in them. Almost 50 years have passed, says Ruhi Afnan, writing in 1970, since the passing of the Master and three of his daughters have died. They were all human and capable of making mistakes. But none of them were guilty of covenant breaking. All of them asked for forgiveness and hoped for His mercy, but they never broke the Covenant. During periods of great sensitivity and danger their faith and belief in the Sun of Reality and their loyalty to the will of Abdul Baha and the Guardianship of Shoghi Effendi was clear and evident. They endured great hardship, they suffered insults and degradation, they were outcasts, lonely and alone, but unfaithful to the will of the Master, Abdul Baha, their father, they were not. Their constant hope was that godly characteristics and God's good names should ever be present in their speech and their actions and make them worthy of God's mercy.

In brief, essentially my mother, Touba Khanum, ill and mostly bed ridden since the passing of Abdul Baha, was 'expelled' because she would not 'shun' me when I was cast out.

Rouha Khanum, essentially was 'expelled' because she was keen that the Master's wishes regarding Shoghi Effendi's marriage to her daughter Maryam, be carried out, while Shoghi Effendi preferred Ruhiyyih Khanum.

Zia Khanum, essentially was 'expelled' because she was keen to find out why Ruhiyyih Khanum could not have children and arrived at the truth.

Monawar Khanum was 'expelled' because she received her elder sister too warmly when she returned to see Shoghi Effendi.

Had they committed a sin it was related to unquestioning obedience and not to lack of faith in the Sun of Reality and the Guardian. Their sin was that when Shoghi Effendi cast me out he considered it their duty to obey him with no whys and wherefores asked – and to distance themselves from me. However, obedience of the 'mirrors' that speak of the Sun of Reality is a duty when that mirror is inspired by that spiritual source and practices the principles therein enshrined. Obedience of ordinary, personal or worldly orders that caused my expulsion are outside that orbit. Here the measure of one's faith is belief in the Sun of Reality and not in matters that don't even have any moral aspects.

As was seen, Baha'u'llah in the opening lines of the Aqdas stated that:

> 'The first duty prescribed by God for his servants is the recognition of Him who is the Dayspring of His revelation and the fountain of His laws and who represents the Godhead in both the Kingdom of his Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieves this duty has attained unto all good, and whoso is deprived thereof has gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoves everyone who reaches this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him who is the Desire of the world.'

But, as has been mentioned, Ruhiyyih Khanum gave preference to the obedience of the 'mirrors that spoke of Him'. She says 'Faith and obedience are the most important factors in one's relation to God, His Manifestation, to the Head of the Faith. One must believe even if one does not see, and even if one does not believe, one must obey.' Obedience of the 'mirrors that speak of Him' is conditional upon their words conforming with the words of the Sun of Reality. Otherwise it would be wrong. And whoever places obedience before belief is wrong and that obedience is no longer mandatory. Following that line is to follow sin and sinners. It is not following the Sun of Reality, the source of all good and the means of salvation. Negation does not result in being and obscurity does not bring about manifestation.

God expresses his wishes, makes clear that which is best for humankind and shows them the means of salvation. But at the same time people are free to choose to follow that route, benefit from and enjoy its outcome, or to turn away and bear the consequences. This does not require blind obedience. Rather, it needs complete knowledge, freedom of choice and faith in the words of God. Blind obedience turns a human being into an instrument devoid of conscience or will, depriving his speech and actions of any moral content. Here action becomes worthless. In this world knowledge, insight and freedom of choice are the supreme sources of justice. Without them God's will could not be realised. What humanity needs is the radiance of the Sun of Reality, not obedience of the Guardians. Obedience should apply to the divine characteristics and qualities that are seen in them. Only divine radiance should shine in their hearts to make them worthy of leadership. Obscurity and obedience produces nothing but darkness.

Baha'u'llah and Abdul Baha, like the Prophet Mohammad, established a centre and system of guardianship, writing wills and making covenants with Baha'is to look towards those they appointed, and if they found divine lights emanating from them then to benefit from that and to reflect it upon others. The ladies of the household followed this route and tried their best that no 'dust of despondency' should disturb Shoghi Effendi, until that 'young plant' reached full maturity and assumed his responsibilities. These are the loyal intentions that one can expect in this world. Ruhiyyih Khanum, however, in her ambitious desire for position and power and in an effort to hide her inability to have children, brought the whole institution of guardianship to an end. And now, in *The Priceless Pearl* she makes it appear as if it was God's will that what occurred should have happened. The negative outcome of all these actions remains to be seen. The future will tell what the effects upon humankind shall be and what conflicts the Cause will suffer as a result.

Forbidding me from teaching the Cause

Preaching the Faith is to spread the knowledge of the 'Dayspring of inspiration and fountain of His love' in the world. It is the spread of God's mercy upon human society. As has been mentioned, God's mercy is shed upon all of creation. It is by that heavenly energy that grass grows, animals are animated and humans are spiritually nurtured. But then, everything in the world must proceed to share and spread that divine bounty for it to become a source of guidance and salvation for others. In this world of humanity the result of such an outpouring of divine inspiration should result in the outpouring of knowledge and wisdom for everyone to benefit. This is the purpose and goal of the preaching of the Cause: spreading the outpouring of God's mercy upon one and all. Preaching is therefore a primary and essential aim of every person in human society. Whatever enlightenment and wisdom one attains one must spread and place at the service of others. This preaching has not only been seen in the Bab's Bayan but also in many of Baha'u'llah's tablets. Abdul Baha, in his will, states that after him the Afnans and the Aghsans [members of the Bab's and Baha'u'llah's families] should, like the disciples of Jesus Christ, go to all parts of the world to preach the Cause. To this he added that:

> 'If anyone or any assembly forbids that, they must not be obeyed and people must continue to persue their essential duties. Disobeying such orders becomes their religious duty.'

Such preaching was and is my supreme desire. Twice I succeeded in realising this goal and spent time in the US and Canada spreading the message of the Cause to the best of my ability. If I did not go again it was due to the fact that being in Haifa in the service of Shoghi Effendi took precedence over traveling abroad.

Sometime after I was 'expelled' from the Cause and after the Bab's shrine on Mount Carmel had been completed, a club of university graduates – chaired by an old friend of my sister's – invited me to talk about the Cause. This I was honoured to do and at the appointed date spoke at that meeting. However, upon leaving the hall, Mr. Mohammad Baha'i and Mr. Mansour, who, at that time worked at the house of Abdul Baha (and were in the service of Shoghi Effendi) came forward, spat in my face and slapping me in the face said 'You are an enemy of the Cause and you give talks about it!?

Firstly, I have always been most faithful and steadfast in my faith and most dedicated in my belief in the Sun of Reality and the established guardianship. Nothing has shaken my faith, nor will ever do. Why should I therefore be barred from sharing and spreading that knowledge that I have gained and from which I have benefited. Could it be that I have been bereft of that divine mercy and grace? Is it not my duty, in whatever manner I am capable of doing it, to share that radiance? What is more, as an Afnan and an Aghsan, should l allow anyone to stop me from spreading the Cause?

Preaching is not limited to speech. God's message can be transmitted by the written word as well. I therefore kept to myself and spent my time writing. Some of these books are already published, others are ready for publication. All of them, directly or indirectly regard the teachings of Baha'u'llah. My sources are his tablets and his writings. How can the reading of such books harm Baha'is? But they have been blacklisted and Baha'is forbidden from reading them. Investigating the truth is the first step on God's way. In the Seven Valleys Baha'u'llah states that no ropes shall bind him and no belief deter him. Investigating the truth and intellectual independence to search are basic principles of Baha'ism. In the essay entitled 'Siyasiyyeh', (to which I do not have access at the present time to quote directly from it), Abdul Baha writes about the subject. Baha'u'llah speaks about that in his tablet to Sheikh Salman, where he says:

> 'Do not respond to anyone's words with argument and disputation, rather look at them with the eyes of pity and mercy – unless they have written vitriolic things against God's Cause. For today that Cause must be defended with the spoken and written word and not by the sword. The defence of God's Cause, he adds, grants them that do it an enviable position among the elect.'

In another place Baha'u'llah, having heard that certain things written to repudiate the Cause had been burnt, condemned it, adding that God forgives what has happened, but that the burning or destroying of anyone's words are not pleasing in His sight.

From such statements it becomes clear that unless writings are grossly antagonistic to God's call, they should not be destroyed. Rather, they should be kept and read and critically assessed, so that the truth is arrived at. Today such behaviour is not only a duty of every believer but maybe the greatest service that can be rendered to the Cause. For example, what leads the young astray is a disbelief in God which we see clearly in Europe and America. Such disbelief is contrary to the principles of the Cause. Answering such matters is a duty of every Baha'i writer. My book entitled *Existentialism* is the answer of the Cause to such disbelief in God. As is my book *Zoroaster's Influence on Greek Thought* which is an explanation of a truth that Baha'u'llah states in his tablet of Hikmat, to the effect that philosophy has acquired and adapted things from religion. So why should Baha'is avoid reading these books? They must read them and if they find anything there which is contrary to the principles of the Cause they should refute them – all in the service of truth and the Cause.

Forbidding me from visiting the Shrines

One problem I had after my expulsion was visiting the shrines. Not wanting to be a cause of trouble I read the 'ziyaratnameh' (prayer chanted at the shrine) from a quiet street south of the Shrine of the Bab. Abdul Baha was my example. During their time at the citadel of Acre, he would climb a wall where he could face Bahji from a distance and chant the 'ziyaratnameh' from there. One day, I wanted to visit the shrine at Bahji. It was summer and Shoghi Effendi and Ruhiyyih Khanum were in Europe. I took the opportunity and went early one morning. Upon arrival I requested the doorman to grant me entrance, which he did. For one hour or more I was alone at the shrine, crying and pouring out my heart, seeking forgiveness from Baha'u'llah for my sins and shortcomings. Sometime later, Mr. Mansour came to my house with the message from Ruhiyyih Khanum telling me that if I went to the Shrine again orders had been given to beat me and throw me out. I do not believe that in any faith excepting Catholicism, is an excommunicated person forbidden to enter a place of worship to pray.

When I first arrived in Iran I requested a visit to the house of the Bab in Shiraz. Permission was not granted. Not wanting to create a problem I refrained from going. The Bab, however, in the Persian Bayan, section 14 of the 4th unit says that whoever seeks to visit shrines should be granted security and will be forgiven that which God forgives. The summary of that chapter is that anyone who seeks refuge at a shrine should be granted that refuge, for shrines everywhere are a manifestation of Him who grants refuge but never needs it. In the next chapter he states: 'No one is permitted to deny refuge to anyone wishing to seek it in such places (shrines).' What is more, he will lose the right to issue such commands.

In accordance with the above, the right that the Sun of Reality grants me to visit holy shrines and seek refuge there cannot be taken away from me. If the Spiritual Assembly deprives me of that right it will immediately lose its moral authority and will no longer be able to demand obedience. For obedience of the Spiritual Assembly or the House of Justice depends upon their decisions or orders being in conformity with the principles of the Sun of Reality and not the opposite. Divine inspiration takes precedence in all cases and it is only the orders of the Sun of Reality that are not bound by any conditions. The orders of the assemblies and House of Justice are conditional since they are the orders of the 'mirrors that speak of Him'. As has been previously pointed out, Baha'u'llah, in the tablet of The Sun of Reality and in the tablet addressed to Sheikh Salman, has clearly stated this principle. In short, as the Bab states, he who seeks refuge at the shrines cannot be deprived of that.

In one of the letters that I wrote to Shoghi Effendi I included this prayer by Baha'u'llah, one which very fully expresses my inner feelings and condition. This prayer was often on my lips and I still sometimes say it and seek the peace it grants me:

> In the name of God on high
> My God, do you deprive him who approaches the sacred place of your being?
> My Beloved, do you further separate someone who seeks the city of your nearness?
> My desired one, do you demean him who clings to the hem of your glory?
> My goal and my desire, do you forbid one who has arrived at the font of your benevolence?
> My Adored one, do you impoverish him who clings to your great bounty?
> Worshiping you, do you put to death him whose heart you revived with the brilliance of your illumination?
> Do you strike dumb one who is ever grateful for having heard the wonders in your verses?
> No, by your Glory and Greatness. You do not deprive him who comes towards you. Nor do you throw out him who calls on you.
> Nor do you refuse him who seeks your realm of 'fana' (non-being).
> For you are high above all else, the giver of all to one and all, and the ruler of both earth and the heavens.
> For you are the Sacred. the Beloved, and the Forbearing.

This I submit, having dared much.

‘Fani’ (perishable one)

Ruhi Afnan

طهران   خدمت اعضای محترم محفل مقدّس روحانی ایران مشرّف گردد .

معروض انکه   خاندانی بس بزرگ از سلاله نفوسی که ایّام جمال مبارک از ایران مهاجرت نموده بودند در ترکیّه سکنی یافتند . شخصی بین آنان پس از پیروزی در حیات دنیوی خود کنسلگری شرفی ایرانرا باجازه و تشویق حضرت عبد البهاء قبول کردند . بعد از صعود مبارک حضرت شوقی افندی مصلحت امرا در آن دیدند که از امور سیاسیّه کاملا تجنّب نمایند ولذا از آن شخص طلبیدند که از آن وظیفه استعفا کند . ایشان قبول نکردند بخصوص چون بتشویق حضرت عبد البهاء بود و لوحی در آن بابت در دست داشتند . این نافرمانی سبب کدورت حضرت شوقی افندی شد و سبب گشت که از او بکلّی ببریدند . واین سبب شد که اکثر افراد آن دودمان از مطرودین محسوب گشتند . چون بنده از ترکیّه میگذشتم با فرزندان شخص که در این بین مرحوم شده بود محشور شدم . دیدم که افراد آن عائله هنوز تعلّق زیادی بامر مبارک دارند و در ایمانشان بجمال قدم راسخ و در بندگیشان بمرکز میثاق و ولایت امر متین است .

و از دوری از زمره احبّا بنهایت متأسّف هستند . از این ایمان و استقامت آنان متأثّر شدم و پرسیدم که حال که ابویشان مرحوم شده و مورد اختلاف باقی نمانده و دستگاه کنسلگری پیچیده شده چرا در ظلّ امر داخل نمیشوند و از خدمت امر مبارک باز مانند . اصرار کردم که در این راه بکوشند و عریضه باین مضمون ببیت العدل بنویسند . پیشنهاد بنده را پذیرفتند و نامه ای بحیفا نوشتند . چون بانگلیسی بود به بنده ارائه دادند و قسمی از انرا فعلاً بنده نوشتم . طولی نکذشت که استدعای انها استجابت شد و حال کلّ در ظلّ امر هستند و شکّی ندارم که بخدمت امر موفّق هستند. از ان گروه فقط یك خانم خارج امر باقی مانده بود . ایامی که در بیروت بودم این خانم میامدند که خدمت ورقه مبارکه روحا خانم که انوقت در قید حیات بودند مشرّف شوند . و هر وقت که ذکر امر میشد بنده ایشانرا سرزنش میکردم که جهد نمیکند که مجدّدا داخل زمره احبّا شوند یا دودمان خود جمع شوند .

ایّام نوروز گذشته که بنده در بیروت بودم این خانم برسم دیدنی از زهرا خانم ببنده منزل آمدند . صحبت دوباره درجدائی از احبّا و خویشان ایشان شد . تردید ایشان و بیم انکه شاید شروطی سخت برایشان در راه گذارند مرا بنهایت عصبانی کرد . لذا ترشروئی کردم و پرخاش نمودم . چندی بعد شنیدم که ایشان نیز با بهائیان منضم شده اند و بمجالس میروند . درسی سال اخیر این شیوه بنده بود . اگر بنده بخدمت امر فائز نیستم چرا دیگران محروم مانند ؟ باری در نتیجه چنین اقدامات بنده عدّه ای از مطرودین مجدّدا داخل امر شدند و حال بخدمت مشغول هستند . ذکر اسم آنان لازم نیست . ولی در ضمن بر خود فرض

میدانم که جسارت نموده اعضای ان محفل موقّر را یادآوری نمایم که این شیوه مطبوعه و شروطی که بردخول در ظلّ امر گذاشته میشود کاملا منافی نصّ صریح کلام منزله حضرت بهاءالله و حضرت باب است و آن جائز نیست.

میزان حقیقت من یظهره الله است .

در بیان فارسی حضرت باب میفرمایند " از نقطه مشیّت اولیّه الی مالانهایه در هر ظهوری میزان همان نقطه حقیقت است و اوامر مشرقه از شمس جود او ـــــــ. . . . . الی یوم من یظهره الله که اواست میزان و امر اواست میزان و احوال اواست میزان و کلمات اواست میزان و دلالات اواست میزان ما ینسب الی المیزان میزان اذا تحقّق النسبة فی الکتاب و الّا علی قدر ما یقطع النسبة یقطع الحکم الی حین یرفع کلّ النسبة و یبقی النفی فی النار "(۱۳-۲) .

در عالم امکان و تغییر مقیاس هر شیء ظهور آن حقیقت است بصورت مطلق و کمال . نه حقیقت امکانیّه دیگری که خود قابل تغییر و تبدیل است. انبیاء الهی "میزان " حقیقت محسوب میشوند چون مظاهر مشیّت الهی هستند و هم از حیث ذات و هم از حیث صفات پاره‌ای از آن . چنانچه حضرت باب میفرمایند " ذات الهی لم یزل و لا یزال ظهور آن عین بطون اواست و بطون او عین ظهور اواست" (نیز بیان فارسی ۸-۲) ـ پس حقیقت بصورت مطلق در آنان یعنی مظاهر ظهور بنحو اکمل یافت میشود نه در افراد و یا سازمانهای عالم امکان که همواره قابل تغییر و تبدیل هستند . شمس حقیقت یا مشیّت الهیّه آفریننده جمیع ممکنات است یعنی جمیع حقایق اشیاء در عالم امکان . اینها بکلمه او از عدم بوجود میایند .چنانچه نیز در بیان میفرمایند . " فی آن بقوله یخلق الشیء ان ینطق به لانّ قوله الحقّ . ملخّص این باب انکه قول شجره حقیقت مشابه نمیشود بقول او قول احدی از ممکنات زیرا که بقول او کینونت شیء خلق میگردد .مثلا اگر تکلّم نفرموده بود ان شجره در ظهور قرآن بولایت امیر المؤمنین خلق آن ولایت نمیشد "(و ۲-۳) .

در تفسیر آیه مبارکه در قرآن "والشمس و ضحاها و القمر اذا تلاها " حضرت بهاءالله مظاهر ظهور را بشمس حقیقت واولیاء را بقمر تشبیه میفرمایند . میگویند که اولیاء که پس از ظهور مظاهر الهی ظاهر میشوند پرتو خود را از آن شمس حقیقت اقتباس میکنند تا بر عالمیان بیفشانند . در این ظهور حضرت بهاءالله ولایت را با بیت العدل در یک سازمان جمع و توام میفرمایند . و اولیاء امر را رئیس لا ینعزل آن قرار میدهند . ولی نیز میفرمایند که امور سیاسیّه کل راجع است بامنای بیت عدل الهی و عبادات بما انزله الله فی الکتاب . باین معنی که قوای تشریعیّه این سازمان منحصر در امور سیاسیّه است و از آن تجاوز نمیتواند . صحّت ایمان که از عبادت محسوب میشود خارج قوّه فرمان ان سازمان است .

ایمان بشمس حقیقت

دین تجلّی نور یا رحمت منبسطه الهیست که بر حقیقت کلّ اشیاء از جمله هوش انسان میتابد . ایمان انعکاس

ان پرتو یزدانیست . و هوش انسانی آن آینه‌ای که در آن انعکاس حاصل میشود .آگاهی بان پرتو یزدانی و قبول پیروی آن روشنائی فقط دلیل بر آن ایمان است . این شعور شخصی و درونیست . فقط آن افراد بر صحّت آن شعور و ایمان آگاه هستند . اذعان فرد و اقرار او فقط دلیلیست بر آن ایمان . حضرت عبد البهاء در وصیّتنامه خود ایمان بحضرت باب و حضرت بهاء الله را یگانه شرط بهائی بودن مینمایند . شرط دیگری ذکر نمیفرمایند . چنانچه قرآن کریم میفرماید "انّما المؤمنون الذین اذا ذکر الله وجلت قلوبهم و اذا تلیت علیهم آیاته زادتهم ایمانا وعلی ربّهم یتوکّلون " (الانفال ۲). ذکری از میزانی خارج از هوش خود افراد نیست که بر صحّت آن ایمان حکم کند. شعور چنین "وجل" که حالت درونی است دلیل کافی است بر ایمان .

رحمت مخصوصه ذات الهی بر شمس حقیقت

این مبدا که رابطه افراد انسان با شمس حقیقت مستقیم است در بیان فارسی شرح کافی یافته . از جمله در باب اوّل از واحد رابع میفرمایند "مقام این آیه عظیم است قل الله حقّ و انّ ما دون الله خلق و کلّ له عابدون . و دون این آیت که در اواست خلق اواست .و این آیتیست که در او دیده نمیشود الّا الله که مادون او خلق اواست. و این آیتی است که در او آیتیّت دیده نمیشود بل نفس ظهور الله و ذات بطون الله و علوّ علوّ الله و سموّ سموّ الله و کینونیّت ازل و ذاتیّت قدم و طلعت صرفه بحته ". در این صورت شمس حقیقت با خداوند آفریننده ذاتا یکی هستند . سپس میفرمایند "چون در این مرایا دیده نمیشود الّا من هو حیّ لم یزل ولا یزال این است که بآن حیات اینها حیّند". یعنی چون یگانگی ذاتی بین شمس حقیقت یا ظهور مشیّت الهی و خداوند آفریننده موجود است پرتو یکی همان پرتو دیگریست .و بان حقایق امکانیّه پرورش مییابند . "و از برای اسماء الهی نه اوّلی است و نه آخری ونه از برای او عددی بوده و نه هست" .یعنی این شموس حقیقت از اوّل امکان امده ومیایند الی آخر .

رحمت منبسطه شمس حقیقت بر افراد عالم امکان

سپس در همان باب میفرمایند "و در کینونیّت هر شیء آیتی عن الله بوده و هست که با او توحید اورا تواند کرد . و آن آیت مشیّت است در او که در او دیده نمیشود الّا الله . و در نفس خود مشیّت نفس اواست که مرآت الله بوده باشد که دلالت نکرده و نمیکند الّا علی الله جلّ وعزّ. و این آیتی است که در هر شیء دیده نمیشود در او الّا الله . زیرا متوجّه در حین توجّه بالله خلق نمیبینند و در حین ذکر خلق بخدا میبینند خلق را . زیرا میدانند که این خلق خدا لحق او بوده و هست . و مادون او خلق اواست". بین هر آفریننده و خواست او یک یگانگی ذاتی موجود است . و چنانچه دیده شد اوّل ظهور چنین یگانگی بین آفریننده و شمس حقیقت یا مظهر آن مشیت اوّلیّه است . مشیّت اوّلیّه بروز همان ذات است . بروز او از ذات اواست .ولی چون شمس حقیقت خواست آفریننده خود را بر هوش انسانی تجلّی مینماید و حقیقت امکانیّه آن پرتو یا خواست را میپذیرد یگانگی دیگری حاصل میشود . در این صورت در آینه قلب یا هوش آن فرد دیده نمیشود الّا تجلّی صفاتی

ان شمس حقیقت . یعنی فقط یگانگی صفاتی بین آفریننده و آفرینش خود حاصل میشود . ذات دهنده صور و کمالات متعالی از ذات گیرنده میماند . ولی آن یگانگی بدرجه ایست که آفریننده در آفرینش خود جز نمایش خواست خود نمیبیند . چنانچه آفتاب جز پرتو خود را در آسمان و زمین نمیبیند . در این صورت سرچشمه نور حقیقت در آینه هوش افراد انسان نیست بلکه در خواست خود آفریننده است که بر آن میتابد . و بمقداری که هوش آن فرد پرتو از مصدر حقیقت میگیرد حیات تازه مییابد و پرتو میافکند . چنانچه میفرمایند "و کلّشیء از شبح مثال او خلق شده و همین قسم که از برای او دو آیتست آیه حق و آیه خلق که بآیت خلق عبادت میکند خداوند را و سجده از برای او میکند همین قسم هر شیء بآیت خلقیّت عبادت میکند محبوب خود را . ولی نرسد ونمیرسد الّا بآیتی که عن الله در اواست که مدلّ بر اواست نه بر غیر آن که اگر مدلّ بر نفس آیت باشد از خلق اواست . بلکه احدی از اولو الافئده نظر نکرده و نمیکند الّا الی الله وحده که در کلّ اسماء افئده دیده نمیشود الّا او که اگر غیر از این باشد عبادت منقطع میگردد از عباد و حال انکه هیچ شیء خلق نشده الّا از برای عبادت او چنانچه در قرآن نازل فرموده و ما خلقت الجنّ و الانس الّا لیعبدون . و همین قسم که در اسماء غیر الله دیده نمیشود در مرایای این اسماء هم که افئده موحّدین باشد غیر الله دیده نمیشود که اگر نفسی در حین اسمی نظر بغیر الله کند در آن حین محتجب بوده و در بحر احتجاب غرق گشته چنانچه ناظر در حین نظر در مرآت نمیبیند الّا مثال خود را در او و قصد نمیکند که نفس مرآترا زیرا در مرآت مرآت دیده میشود نه مثال او". و بهمین مضمون در انجام باب اوّل از واحد چهارم میفرمایند "و لم یزل الله کان الها و ما دونه خلق له و لم یکن بین الله و بین خلقه ثالثا و انّما الثالث خلق له لا اله الّا هو انّا کلّ له عابدون".

مقصود مبارك از این بیان انکه در هر شیء در عالم امکان دو حقیقت موجود است . یکی وظیفه تجلّی صفاتی را انجام میدهد و دیگری وظیفه مرآتیّت که مایه انعکاس ان صفات است . مصدر آن تجلّی صفاتی برتر و متعالی از حقیقت مرآتی است چه اگر نبود پرستش که تصاعد شعور شیء بحقیقت مافوق خود تحقّق نمییافت . در صورت انکه در عالم امکان هر چیز در بهبودی و تصاعد و ترقّی است . و ان مقصود از آفرینش است . ولی در حین وجود چنین حقیقت برتر نباید پنداشت که بین این دو یك حقیقت ثالثی نیز موجود است . چه که هر حقیقت ثالث که تصوّر میتوان کرد باید مخلوق باشد چه جز حقیقت خالق و حقیقت مخلوق حقیقت دیگری نیست . پس ولایت و یا سازمانی مانند بیت عدل حقیقت سوّم نمیشود .

پس اوّل وظیفه حقایق امکانیّه از هر قبیل که باشد حتّی اولیاء و سازمانهای دینی انعکاس نور یزدانی است هر یك در سطح خود . باید نور یزدانیرا که از خواست آفریننده میدرخشد اقتباس کنند تا بر محیط خود بیفکنند . چنین مبدا بین آفریننده و آفرینش مجالی برای ظهور حقیقت سوّمی نمیگذارد . این است که میفرمایند "ایاك ان تشرك بالله و لا تدع معه الها آخر و لا تتخذ له شریکا و لا شبیها و لا وزیرا و لا نظیرا و هذا حقّ الایمان ان انتم تعلمون". چنین موقف مجالی برای وساطت پولس رستگاری افراد چنانچه در مسیحیّت موجود گشته

و بتدریج از اساس عقائد دینی شده نمیگذارد .

مقصود از بهائیت چیست؟

در این صورت بهائیت یعنی پرتو یزدانی که از مظهر ظهور یا مشیّت الهی چون رحمت منبسطه بر افراد کائنات میتابد چه ان پذیرنده شاعر باشد چه نباشد . و این پرتو یزدانی مایه علوّ و نموّ و سموّ و کسب کمالات و رستگاری آن میگردد . چنین بهائیت محدود بحدودی نمیشود و نخواهد شد . ان پرتو بر خاك و خاشاك و گل و لاله و حیوان و انسان و هوشیر و گوش‌او یکسان میتابد . مگر انکه ان حقیقت فردیّه خود رو برگرداند و از ان درخشنائی محروم نماید . این است که حضرت بهاء الله میفرمایند " اگر کسی الیوم دعوی نماید که عالم امریه بحدّی محدود شده و یا باشاره مستشیر چنین نفس ابعد ناس است از صراط سویّ عدل چه‌که عالم اطلاق و امر مقدّس از تحدید و تقیید بوده ". ایمان شعور و قبول آن پرتو یزدانیست.

باین معنی بهائیت پرتو صفات الهیست نه بروز ذات رحمانی . قسمی یا پاره‌ای از ذات مقدّس الهی نیست . عقل افراد بشر جزئی از عقل کلّی الهی نیست که مصدر حکمت باشد . مجموع عقل افراد انسان عقل کلّی الهی نمیشود چه‌که مخلوق است نه خالق امکان است نه مطلق . عقل بشری مستقلّ بالذات نیست درخشنائی خود را از سرچشمه بهتر و بالاتر میگیرد . امر بهائی باید همواره مستقیما از مظهر ظهور نور جوید تا تابش یابد . در کتاب عهد خود حضرت بهاء الله رؤسای امر را "اولیا" و "امنا" مینامند . باین معنی که تولیت امر بآنان محوّل گشته . امنای حقیقت گرانبهائی شده اند که باید پرستار و خدمتگذار باشند تا در مجتمع انسانی پخش شود و جهانگیر گردد . این فرق بین تجلّی ذاتی و تجلّی صفاتیرا حضرت بهاء الله در معنای "بسیط الحقیقة کلّ الاشیاء" شرح میدهند که مقصود حکیم نبوده که واجب الوجود "منحل بوجودات غیر متناهیه شده ". "انّ انوار بسیط الحقیقه یرعی کلّ الاشیاء ". این فرق را باید همواره در نظر داشت تا امتیاز عقیده بهائی نمایان گردد . "اولیاء و امناء " وکیل ویا وزیر و یا نظیر و یا مندوب مظاهر الهی نیستند که آن قوّه الهی در آنان مستور باشد و در مورد خود اشکار شود . فقط مرایا از شمس حقیقت هستند . باید فعلا از آن مصدر ربّانی درخشنائی جویند خود مصدر نور نیستند . فقط مرایای مستحکی از شمس حقیقت هستند .

مرایای مستحکیه از شمس حقیقت

در لوحی بافتخار شیخ سلمان حضرت بهاء الله میفرمایند " ای سلمان لم یزل حق بظاهر بین ناس حکم فرموده و جمیع نبیین و مرسلین مامور بوده که ما بین بریّه بظاهر حکم نمایند . و جز این جائز نه . مثلا ملاحظه نما نفسی حال مؤمن و موحّد است و شمس توحید در او تجلّی فرموده بشانی که مقر و معترف است بجمیع اسماء و صفات الهی و شهادت میدهد بانچه جمال قدم شهادت داده بلنفیه و بنفییه . در این مقام کل اوصاف در حقّ او جاری و صادق است . بلکه احدی قادر بر وصف او علی ما هو علیه الّا الله نبوده و کل این اوصاف راجع میشود بان تجلّی

که از سلطان مجلّی بر او اشراق فرموده. در این مقام اگر نفسی از او اعراض نماید از حقّ اعراض نموده. چه‌که در او دیده نمیشود مگر تجلّیات الهی. مادامیکه در این مقام باقی است اگر کلمه دون خیر در باره او گفته شود قائل کاذب بوده و خواهد بود. و بعد از اعراض ان تجلّی که موصوف بود و جمیع این اوصاف راجع باو بمقرّ خود برگشت. دیگر آن نفس نفس سابق نیست تا ان اوصاف در او باقی ماند". بعد میفرمایند "ای سلمان الیوم کل اشیاء را مرایا مشاهده نما چه‌که بیک کلمه خلق شده اند و در صقع واحد بین یدی الله قائمند. و اگر جمیع باین شمس عزّ باقی که از افق قدس ابهی اشراق فرموده توجّه نمایند در جمیع تجلّی شمس بهیئته مرتسم و منطبع. در این صورت جمیع اوصاف و صفات شمس بر آن مرایا صادق چه‌که دیده نمیشود در آن مرایا مگر شمس و ضیاء آن. و بر عارف بصیر مبرهن است که این اوصاف مرایا لنفسه بنفسه نبوده بلکه کلّ اوصاف راجع است بآن تجلّی که از مشرق عنایت شمس در آن مرایا ظاهر و مشرق شده. و مادامیکه این تجلّی باقی اوصاف باقی. و بعد از محو آن تجلّی از صور مرایا وصف واصفین آن مرایا را کذب صرف و افک محض بوده و خواهد بود. لانّ الاسماء والصفات یطوفنّ حول تجلّی الذی اشرق من الشمس لا حول المرایا بنفهنّ لنفسهنّ".

در جواب سؤال از شمس حقیقت و مرایای متحکیه از او حضرت بهاء الله میفرمایند "نزد اولی العلم و البصر معلوم بوده که شمس احدیّه و ساذج صمدیّه در مقعد عزّ تقدیس و مکمن قدس تنزیه خود لم یزل و لا یزال طالع و مشرق و مضیء بوده و خواهد بود چنانچه هر ذی بصر دقیق و ذی نظر رقیق و صاحبان فطرت ربّانی و شاربان باده لطائف معانی آن شمس الهی و جوهر عزّ لطانیرا در مقرّ خود بعین بصیرت که مقدّس از این عیون تیره محتجبه است ملاحظه مینمایند علی مقام لا یاخذها غروب و لا افول و لا کسوف. و آنانکه محتجب بهوای نفس شده و از ملاحظه انوار صبح صادق که لم یزل بعنایت شمس مستنیر بوده محروم شوند باسی بر تشعشعات انوار شمس نبوده چه که او در مقرّ خود لایح و ساطع و مستضیء بوده و این عدم ادراک ببصر باصر و نظر ناظر راجع بوده و خواهد بود. و همچنین جمیع این نفی و اثبات چه از مقبلین و چه از معرضین بمقامات خود این انفس ضعیفه و قویّه راجع است. بهیچ وجه بآن شمس حقیقت راجع نخواهد بود. چه‌که آن جوهر وجود در علوّ ارتفاع و سموّ امتناع خود بوده و مقدّس از تصدیق مقبل و تکذیب معرض. و لکن هر بصری که بفطرت اصلیّه آن ساذج قدم را ادراک نمود از او محسوب و در ظلّ او لم یزل و لا یزال محشور خواهد بود و در جنّت ابهی که اعلی الجنان است وارد و مقرّ یابد. و دون ان در ظلمت نفس و نار نفی داخل بلکه الی ما شاء الله خالد خواهد بود. و علاوه بر آن اگر آن شمس مشرق نباشد و این فیض مطلق از مرایای موجودات قطع فیض نماید ابدا شیء بر وجه ارض موجود نخواهی یافت. دیگر انکه وجود مرایای احدیّه بنفسه لنفسه نخواهد بود. چنانچه این مطلب در جمیع الواح و زبر مندرج و ثبت شده. و بر هیچ عاقل روحانی و بالغ نورانی مستور نیست. بلکه وجود مرایا بوجود شمس است خواه شاعر باین رتبه عالی بوده و خواه غافل. چه‌که عنایت آن شمس مشرقه از افق احدیّه من دون جهه بوده و خواهد بود. این مقام رحمت منبسطه ربّانیه است که من دون سؤال و طلب و یا عرفان و ایقان

عنایت میفرماید. غایت این است که بعضی از مرایا که این رتبه اعلی و مقام ابهارا ادراک نموده اند در رتبه و مقام اعلای از دون خود خواهند بود. و دیگر انکه ملاحظه نما که اگر شمس موجود نباشد مرایا ابدا وجود نخواهند داشت و لا یزال در حجب عدم خواهند بود .... و جز آن جمال قدم احدی بر لئالی مستوره در این بحر اعظم کما هو حقّه اطّلاع نیابد. و او است مظهر و مبیّن اسرار و علوم مقدّره در بیان. بلی مرایای منطبعه ادراک نمایند علی قدر مراتبهم و استعداداتهم لا علی ما هو علیه. لهذا احدی قادر بر تقرّب بسدره معنی در طور بیان نخواهد بود الّا من شاء ربّک .... چگونه میشود که هر نفس بخیال خود هوسی نماید و امر الله را محدود نماید فتعالی عمّا هم یعرفون و یقولون .... و اگر این عنایت مشرقه و منیره لائحه از مرایای وجود موجودات منقطع شود کل را لا شیء محض خواهی دید بل معدوم صرف. فتعالی از این هبوب روحانی که باقبال و شعور و التفات و یا دون آن محدود نشده. لم یزل بر اجساد میّته و عظام رمیمه و هیاکل باقیه وزیده و خواهد وزید خواه احدی ملتفت بوده و یا غافل و محجوب مانده. مثلا نسیم ربیع بر جمیع اشیاء میوزد و بر کلّ من علی الارض مرور مینماید و لنفسیکه از نوم غفلت مدهوشند و یا از رحمت الهی بیهوش بر هر دو مرور مینماید و لکن هنیئا للشاعرین. چه که غافلین لم یزل عند الله مردود و غیر مقبول بوده چنانچه مذکور شد. و الیوم جمیع من دان فی البیان و دون آن از ملل مختلفه مامورند بدخول در ظلّ این سدره مرتفعه و شجره منطقه و کلمه جامعه و حجّت محکمه و دلیل واضحه و سبل مشهوده و مفر و مقر و مستقر از برای نفسی نبوده و نیست. و جمیع بنفس خود مکلّفند باین امر بدیع منیع. و دیگر انکه اقرار بر این کلمه منوط و مشروط بتصدیق نفسی نبوده و نخواهد بود. چنانچه بر هر ذی بصری مشهود و واضح است. چه میشود که مسئول عنه خود در غفلت باشد چنانچه امم فرقانیّه بهمین جهت ناظر بوده از محلّ وحی الهی و معدن و منبع فیض مطلق ربّانی محروم ماند ماند و چشم و گوش را بقول و فعل رؤسای خود معلّق و منوط داشته ".

بصورت واضح و غیر قابل تاویل حضرت بهاء الله این عمومیّت آئین بهائیرا توضیح میفرمایند. اوّلا که آئین بهائی فیض مطلق الهیست و رحمت منبسطه ربّانی. صفت عام دارد و حدوداتی نمیپذیرد. تجلّی نور الهیست بر جمیع کائنات در عالم امکان. "من دون جهه بوده و خواهد بود". و همچنین "من دون سؤال و طلب و یا عرفان و ایقان " داده میشود اگرچه بعضی انرا ادراک میکنند و بمقامی بهتر و بالاتر میرسند و بعضی بان پی نمیبرند و از ان نعمت بیخبر میمانند. تعیین یا مشخّص نمودن تمییز از غیر است. باین معنی که حضرت بهاء الله بآئین بهائی میدهند تعیین شخص بهائی جائز نه. محدودیت مجتمع انسانیست. آئین بهائی مذهبی از مذاهب و یا دینی از ادیان نیست چنانچه عامّه در این ایّام انرا میپندارند. رحمتیست جهانگیر خواستیست پایدار. نامحدود است و نامشروط. هرکس بر پیوستن بان شروطی گذارد انرا از عالم امکان میکند و زیر نفوذ جائز الخطائی. در این صورت مطلق نمیماند که میزان حقیقت و رفتار انسانی شود. ایمان و ایقان شعور بان فیض است. موفقیست درونی و روانی. غیر مقیاس ان نمیشود هر کس ان غیر باشد مگر مظهر ظهور الهی. و اگر روزی شخصی یا سازمانی بر آن شروطی وضع گذارد آن حقیقت منبسطه الهیرا بحزبی یا طریقتی یا طائفه‌ای

مینماید . حقیقت منبسطه عام الهی که مطلق و ابدیست اسیر عالم امکان میشود و قابل تغییر و تبدیل و محدود و خطاکار و پابند مجتمع انسانی . عمومیّت از آن زائل میگردد و خصوصیّت بر آن مستولی میشود چون ایمان فرد مشروط بقبول دیگری گردد که خود از عالم امکان است و مطلق نیست اطلاق و انطلاق دین از میان میرود . وجود آن شروط عمومیّت آن آئینرا واژگون میکند و محبّترا بزور و ایقانرا بترس و معرفترا بمصالح شخصی و آزادیرا بانقیاد ظاهری تبدیل میکند . آئین یزدانی سازمانی میشود بیروح . از انتخابات چه حاصل میشود اگر حاکم خود شروط قبول افراد ناخبینرا مینهد .

باری در آن لوح مبارک حضرت بهاء الله استدلال ببیان میفرمایند و شرح میدهند که چگونه همین موقف حضرت باب بود . یعنی چگونه در ظهور قبل نیز علمای زمان خودرا میزان ایمان افراد قرار داده مایه گمراهی انها شدند و نفوس مؤمنه مقدّسه را محکوم نموده بقتل رساندند . این گناه ملّا باقر بود که فتوی بر قتل سلطان الشهدا داد . در خطاب باو میفرمایند " هو المقتدر العلیم الحکیم . قد احاطت ارياح البغضا سفینة البطحاء بما اکتسبت ایدی الظالمین . یا باقر قد افتیت علی الذین ناح لهم کتب العالم و شهد لهم دفاتر الادیان کلّها و انّکیا ایها البعید فی حجاب غلیظ . . . . انصف بالله بایّ برهان استدلّ علماء الیهود و افتوا به علی الروح اذ اتی بالحقّ و بایّ حجّة انکر الفریسیّون و علماء الاصنام اذ اتی رسول الله بکتاب حکم بین الحقّ و الباطل بعدل اضاء بنوره ظلمات الارض و انجذبت قلوب العارفین . . . . یا ایّها الغافل اسمع ما انزله الرحمن فی الفرقان " لا تقولو لمن القی الیکم السلام لست مؤمنا ".

اولیاء

اولیاء امر و امناء بیت عدل از عالم امکان هستند ـ

در پایان نمازی که حضرت بهاء الله برای بهائیان نازل فرموده اند میفرمایند " والصلات و السلام و التکبیر و البهاء علی اولیائك الذین ما منعتهم شئونات الخلق عن الاقبال الیك و انفقوا ما عندهم رجاء ما عندك . انك انت الغفور الکریم ". این ذکر "اولیاء " را صفت امکانیّت میدهد . واین همان امکانیّتیست که چنانچه مذکور شد حضرت باب بحضرت امیر المؤمنین علی ابن ابی طالب میدهند . چه‌که میفرمایند که حضرت امیر بکلمه حضرت رسول خلق شد پس جزئی از ذات الهی نبودند از عالم امکان و مخلوق بودند .

این بحث نظری صرف است چه‌که نه حضرت عبد البهاء و نه حضرت شوقی افندی خودرا شریك و سهیم در تجلّی ذاتی با حضرت باب و حضرت بهاء الله میدانستند . حضرت باب و حضرت بهاء الله در این کور و دور مظاهر مشیّت الهی بودند و پاره‌ای از ذات مقدّس رحمانی مادون آنان چنانچه ذکر شد فقط مرایای مستحکی از شمس حقیقت بودند . یعنی صور موجوده در آنان فقط انعکاس کمالاتیست که در حقیقت ذاتی شمس حقیقت بروز میکند . چنانچه میفرمایند " قل انّ قیام کلّ شیء بالله و قیامه بنفسه لو انتم من الشاعرین . و انّ ضیاء کلّ شیء بضیاء الشمس و ضیائها بنفسها ان انتم من الموقنین . قل انّ افتخار کلّ اسم بموجده و افتخاره بنفسه المهیمن العلیم الحکیم ". حضرت عبد البهاء و حضرت شوقی افندی وظیفه خودرا در آن میدیدند که از آن دو مظاهر مشیّت

الهیّه درخشنائی گرفته برعالمیان پخش کنند و مایه رهنمائی گردند . مثلا حضرت عبد البهاء در مناجاتی میفرمایند "هو الله پاک یزدانا کل گنهکاریم و تو آمرزگار جمیع جامع عیوبیم و تو کاشف کروب گناه این عاصیان را در لوح محفوظ ثبت مفرما و از رقّ منشور محو کن نظر باستحقاق و استعداد مفرما بآنچه شایان آستان رحمانیّت است معامله فرما غفران صفت جلیله است و عفو و صفح از اعظم نعوت آنخداوند مجید پس گناه این بیچارگانرا ببخش و از قصور این عاصیان درگذر ذنب اینعبد اعظم ذنوب و گناه این بی پناه بزرگتر از کوه پر شکوه اوّل قصور این بیسر و سامانرا ببخش پس گناه هر عاصی نادان توئی بخشنده و مهربان و توئی آمرزنده و مستعان ".

این گونه مناجات که امثال آن فراوان است و اشعاری که پس از صعود حضرت بهاء الله سرودند و نامی که برای خود انتخاب کردند و رسائل خویش را بآن امضا میکردند بیش از این شیوه انشاء و لحن کلام در الواح خود کل دلیل است که از مصدر وحی الهی و مشیّت رحمانی و شمس حقیقت نور و رحمت آرزومند بودند و اقتباس میکردند تا بر عالمیان نثار نمایند . این روش حضرت عبد البهاء را ابها و اعلا مرآتی در عالم امکان نمود و فعلا سرمشق عالمیان کرد . گذشته از این تعلّق که بمجالس مناجات داشتند ثابت میکند که این آرزوی نور و رحمت الهی همواره در قلبشان در جوش و فوران بود . و این صفترا جهد میکردند در جمیع ایجاد کنند . هر روز سحر افراد بیت مبارک را بخصوص اطفالرا از خواب بیدار میکردند و در اطاق چای جمع مینمودند و ورقهای از ورقاترا امر میدادند که از الواح مبارک بخواند . بهمین قسم هر شب در مجلس یاران ساعتی یا دو یا خوش صدائیرا امر میفرمودند که از نوشتجات مبارک بخواند یا خود در خصوص مبادی امر و گذارشات تاریخی آن صحبت میفرمودند . ایّامی که والده در خود بیت مبارک ساکن بودند یاد دارم که شبها بعد از نیمه شب از صوت مبارک بیدار میشدیم . از بستر خود برخواسته در صحن خانه که گشایش داشت در تاریکی و تنهائی مشی میفرمودند و بصوت بلند "یا اله المستغاث" میخواندند . لحن مبارک نشان میداد چگونه بار ولایت گران است و جز بعون و عنایت شمس حقیقت و مظهر مشیّت الهی پیشرفت در امور نتوان کرد . و چون حضرت عبد البهاء آینه پاک شمس حقیقت بودند حضرت بهاء الله پرتو خودرا در قلب صافیشان میدیدند و جز نور خودرا در آن نمیدیدند . ولکن نمیشود گفت که حضرت عبد البهاء حقیقت سوّمی بودند بین شمس حقیقت و عالم امکان چه که بفرموده حضرت باب "و لم یکن بین الله و بین خلقه ثالثا و انّما الثالث خلق له ".

شکّی نیست که ایّامیکه حضرت شوقی افندی قائم بر خدمت حضرت عبد البهاء بودند و نزول چنین مناجاترا میگرفتند و استنساخ و یا ترجمه مینمودند و در بعضی اوقات بیاد میسپردند بر این مبدا کاملا مطّلع بودند . میدانستند که حضرت عبد البهاء خودرا شریک و سهیم در عصمت با شمس حقیقت نمیدانستند . در چنین مورد خود نیز دعوی بعصمت نمیکردند و چون هر حقیقت امکانیّه جائز الخطا میدانستند . و فعلا در سنین عدیده که بنده بمنشیگری ایشان مفتخر بودم نه شفها و نه کتبا چنین ادّعائی از ایشان نشنیدم و نخواندم . و آنچه از کلام خود ایشان در کتاب گوهر یکانه موجود است از قرار ذیل است که میفرمایند "حضرت عبد البها اینجانبرا مبیّن آیات و مسئول شریعة الله معیّن فرمود و نهایت سعی و کوشش در تبیین این نکات اصلیّه و تاسیس این

محافل کاملا طبق تعالیم مصرّحه حضرت عبد البهاست اواست که قوّت عنایت نیکند و از من خواسته است، که بتاسیس این مبانی سامیه امریّه بپردازم". (ص ٤٣٥) این کلام حضرت شوقی افندی چنانچه خواهیم دید بیان صریح کامل در ظلّ عصمت کبری بودن است. بهمین معنی نیز حضرت عبد البها در ظلّ عصمت کران جمال قدم یا شمس حقیقت بودند. و این از مبدا مراتیّت خارج نمیشود و از مبدا امکانیّت دور نمیشود. شکّی نیست که تولیت امر مبارک بایشان محوّل شد. ولی سرپرستی با مسؤلیت توام است و مسؤل جائز الخطاست و الّا پریشانی ندارد. مسؤل همواره بیم آن دارد که خطائی از او سرزند و مایه زیان طرف مقابل شود. شعور بچنین مسؤلیت گران بود که حضرت عبد البها را بنگارش چنین مناجات وا داشت. باید از حضرت شوقی افندی که جانشین حضرت عبد البها بودند چنین شعوریرا طلبید نه "عصمت موهوبه" چنانچه در صفحه ٤٨٣ وارد شده. عصمت موهوب یعنی وکالت یعنی وکیل کاملا نفس اصل است. و اگر خطائی از او بروز کند باصل راجع میشود. و چنانچه دیده شد حضرت بهاء الله انرا رفض میکنند. متولّی معصوم نیست. عصمترا باید از وکیل و وزیر و مظهر و شبیه و نظیر طلبید چه که در ذات با حقیقت اصلیّه یکی هستند.

ثانیا عصمت از خصائص آفریننده است چه که اوست مصدر وجود و حقیقت شیء. هر صورتی که میخواهد بمخلوق خود میدهد و میزان راستی و درستی آن میشود. چون و چرا از خواست آفریننده نباید طلبید. تاویلی برنمیدارد. عصمت از خصائص شمس حقیقت و مشیّت الهیست نه از مرایای مستحکی از آن چنانچه حضرت بهاء الله واضحا شرح میدهند و قبلا ذکر شده.

گفتیم که حضرت عبد البها سرمشق حیات دینی و اخلاقی نوع بشر محسوب میشوند. حال حیات دینی و اخلاقی بر دو ستون قائمند معرفت و آزادی در انتخاب انچه خیر است. بی چنین معرفت و آزادی حیات دینی و اخلاقی ممکن نیست. آزادی بانتخاب ارزش میدهد. انسان مجبور چون التیست که اعمالش بی ارزش اخلاقیست. چنین امکان خطا حضرت عبد البهارا سرمشق نمود. اگر امکان خطا در گفتار و کردارشان نبود سرمشق عالم امکان نمیشدند. و از وجودشان ارزشی حاصل نمیشد. پس "معصومیّت بتمام معنی" (ص ٤١٢) که در گوهر یکتا ذکر شده و بحضرت شوقی افندی داده شده بیجاست و ایشانرا از حیات اخلاقی دور میکند مگر انکه بگوئیم که از عالم امکان نبودند بلکه خود شمس حقیقت و مظهر مشیّت الهی بودند. و اینرا هیچ وقت ادّعا نکردند.

ثانیا حضرت شوقی افندی میگویند که حضرت عبد البها ایشانرا مبیّن آیات الله تعیین فرمودند. دیدیم که حضرت بهاء الله چنین تبیین را بصورت مطلق از صلاحیّت شمس حقیقت و ظهور مشیّت اوّلیه که خالق اشیاء است میدانند. میفرمایند "جز ان جمال قدم احدی بر لئالی مستوره در این بحر اعظم کما هو حقّه اطلاع نیابد. و اوست مظهر و مبیّن اسرار و علوم مقدّره در بیان. بلی مرایای منطبعه ادراک نمایند علی قدر مراتبهم و استعداداتهم لاعلی ما هو علیه. لهذا احدی قادر بر تقرّب بسدره معنی در طور بیان نخواهد بود الّا من شاء ربّک". مقصود این است که کلام و تبیان مرایای متحکیه مافوق کلام و تبیان شمس حقیقت نیست. مثل انکه

حقیقت مرایا از عالم امکان است طمشان نیز صفت امکانیّه دارد . هرچه آن اینه پاك و منزّهتر گردد اسرار الهی در آن بیشتر جلوه کند و بکلام شمس‌حقیقت بیشتر پی برد . و این مفهوم کلام حضرت شوقی افندیست که میفرمایند "عبد البها این جانبرا مبیّن ایات و مسؤل شریعت الله معیّن فرمود " . و حضرت عبد البها آن صلاحیّت را از جمال قدم مظهر مشیّت الله و مهبط وحی اسمانی اخذ کردند .

مقصود از " در ظلّ عصمت کبری " چیست

عصمت صفتی نیست که افراد عالم انسان بتوانند در آن شبیه و یا نظیر و یا وکیل شمس‌حقیقت گردند . چنانچه حزب کاتولیك گمان میکنند . عصمت مانند سائر صفات الهیّه پرتوست از شمس‌حقیقت که چون شعاع آفتاب بر آینه قلب انسان میدرخشد بشرطی که آن پاك و منزّه از الایش باشد و رویش همواره و کاملا باو . چنانچه میفرمایند "ما منعتهم شؤونات الخلق عن الاقبال الیك و انفقوا ما عندهم رجاء ما عندك". در این صورت عصمت نیز چنانچه حضرت باب میفرمایند در شمس‌حقیقت است نه در مرآت مستحکی از آن . و چون در مرآت نیست کمترین انحراف از آن مصدر پرتو الهی انرا از نور باز مینماید . این سبد ایمنت که حضرت بهاء الله نیز بکمال وضوح در لوح شمس‌حقیقت بیان میفرمایند . "این معلوم انجناب بوده که انشمس فیض ربّانی و بحر فضل سبحانی اشراق فرمود بر جمیع مرایای موجودات در بعضی که مقابله نموده اند بقرصه منطبع میشود و بر دون آن همان روشنی شعاع ظاهر . این است که آن شمس قدم بعد از انتباع او در صور مرایا انچه وصف نماید مرایارا باوصاف غیر متناهیه خود را وصف نموده . چه که انوار وجه خود را در مرایا مشاهده مینماید . و جمیع این اوصاف منیعه فی الحقیقه بخود راجع است . و این فضل در مرایا موجود است بالتقابل الیها . و بعد از انحراف فانی و معدوم خواهند بود ".

در وصیّتنامه خود حضرت عبد البها میفرمایند که ولیّ امر در ظلّ عصمت کبری است . این کلام یعنی چه ؟ در ظلّ عصمت کبری بودن این نیست که بان شخص یا سازمان صلاحیّت کامل داده شده که مشاریعی بنهد و بی چون و چرا اجرا شود . چنین معنی آن شخص یا سازمانرا وکیل و یا نظیر و یا مندوب مینماید . و چنانچه دیده شد شمس‌حقیقترا چنین وکیل و یا نظیر در عالم امکان نبوده و نیست . آن شخص یا سازمان فقط ولیّ و یا امینی هست که حقیقت گرانبهائی چون امانت در دست او گذاشته شده که حفظ و حراست و پرورش دهد . در ظلّ عصمت کبری بودن یعنی باید آن شخص یا سازمان فعلا چون آینه پرتو از شمس‌حقیقت جوید . یعنی مقدّمات فکریّه خود را از شمس‌حقیقت گرفته رسوم و قوانینی وضع کند که مایه پیشرفت آن مبادی گردد . مصدر این پرتو و مقدّمات فکریه که حکمت الهی مینامند همان وحی آسمانیست که بر انبیاء و مرسلین نازل شده و میشود و در کلام الهی مسطور است . آنان هم آفریننده و هم میزان حقیقت هستند . مقدّمات فکر و فرهنگ نوع بشر از حکمت آنان اقتباس شده و میشود . مثلا اگر شمس‌حقیقت بگوید "عاشروا مع الادیان کلّها بالروح و الریحان " ولیّ امر یا بیت‌عدل نمیتوانند قوانینی فرض کنند که اجرای آن منع شود و یا فتوری در آن حاصل شود . و یا چنانچه ذکر شد شمس‌حقیقت بگوید که دخول در شریعة الله نباید مشروطهم باشد بیت‌عدل یا ولیّ امر نمیتواند شروطی گذارد و از عمومیّت

امر بهائی بکاهد . باید قوانین و رسوم فرعیه متمم و مروج ان مبادی اساسی گردد . چه که یکی حکمت الهیست و دیگری فکر بشری . یکی حقیقت مطلق است و دیگری استنتاجات امکانیه . یکی وحی شمس حقیقت است و دیگری گمان مرایای جائز الخطا . یکی خالق کل شیء است و دیگری مخلوق محدود . یکی موجد و مصدر حقیقت است و دیگری مستمد و مستند بر آن . کلام خالق حاکم بر کلام مخلوق است . اسبقیت دارد و برتر و بالاتر است . اولیا و امنای بیت عدل نفوس برانگیخته ای هستند که در گفتار و کردار برتری بر آئین شمس حقیقت نجویند بلکه همواره اورا پیروی نمایند .

لزومیت ایمان بشمس حقیقت

در آغاز کتاب اقدس حضرت بهاء الله میفرمایند "ان اول ما کتب الله علی العباد عرفان مشرق وحیه و مطلع امره الذی کان مقام نفسه فی عالم الامر و الخلق . من فاز به قد فاز بکل الخیر و الذی منع انه من اهل الضلال و لو یاتی بکل الاعمال " . این مشرق وحی و مطلع امر همان شمس حقیقت است که آفریننده عالم امکان است و از جمله بوجود روحانی و فکری و فرهنگی نوع بشر . این مشرق وحی آفریننده است و ما دون او آفرینش او . این مصدر تجلی ذاتی است و سائر اشیاء مستمد از نور او . یکی بروز حقیقت مطلق است و میزان وجود و کمالات اشیاء و دیگری مستفیض از آن . اولیای امرالهی مانند علی ابن ابی طالب و حضرت عبد البهاء از آن مشرق وحی و مطالع امر چون آینه پاك پرتو گرفته بر عالمیان بخش مینمایند . ولی هرقدر پاکیزه شوند و درخشان شوند خود شمس حقیقت نمیشوند . قائم بنفسه نمیگردند . چنانچه در تفسیر آیه مبارکه "والشمس و ضحاها و القمر اذا تلاها" حضرت بهاء الله بیان میفرمایند که چگونه ولایت قمریست که پس از غروب شمس حقیقت ظاهر میشود و نور خود را از آن مصدر گرفته اشعه هدایت را بر عالمیان میافکند . ولی هیچ وقت آن ماه افتاب نمیشود . حال چون این شمس حقیقت مصدر تجلی ذاتی الهیست بر عالم امکان معرفت او و ایمان بآئین او سرچشمه حیات روحانی و فکر و فرهنگی و انسانی است . این است که پذیرائی آن مشرق وحی و ایمان بآئین او اول قدم در رستگاری افراد انسانی است . بی آن معرفت

غلام الخلد یا جوان جاوید

انبیاء بنی اسرائیل و بویژه اشعیا پیروان خود را مژده دادند که روزی آید که اسرائیل پراکنده و ستمدیده بارض مقدس خواهد مراجعت نمود . انروزرا "یوم الرب" نامیدند و بان امید تسلیت یافتند . و از جمله فضائل آن روز در این خواهد بود که جوانی جاوید بر انها حکمرانی خواهد کرد و صلح و سلام بعالم انسان خواهد داد . او خداوند توانا خواهد بود و پدر پاینده و شاه اشتی . (اشعیا ۹ — ٦) و همچنین میگوید که خداوند یا "رب" شمارا پیشرو خواهد بود (۵۲ — ۱۲) . این یوم رب را حضرت زردشت بروزی تعبیر کرد که اهورا مزدا ظاهر خواهد شد و رستاخیز بزرگی خواهد برپا کرد . مسیحیان این رستاخیز را بظهور حضرت

مسیح برابر کردند ولی چنین مجیء در آن دوره رخ نداد که پیشبینی اشعیا کامل گردد. پس گفتند که در ظهور بعد تحقق خواهد یافت و آن نوید را مژده خوش خواندند و یکدیگر را بآن بشارت میدادند. ولی شش قرن گذشت و یهود بارض مقدس بر نگشتند. در این مورد قرآن نازل شد که میفرماید "عمّ یتساءلون عن النبأ العظیم الذی هم فیه مختلفون کلّا سیعلمون کلّا سیعلمون "(سورة النبأ) .

حضرت باب در بیان میفرمایند که هر کجا در کتب مقدّسه ذکر "ربّ" است مقصود من یظهره الله است. حضرت بهاء الله در سوره هیکل خطاب به پاپ میفرمایند "قد اتی الاب و کمل ما وعدتم". و همچنین میفرمایند "هذا لهو الوالد الذی اخبرکم به اشعیاء". و در خصوص ورود ان پدر آسمانی در آغاز در اراضی مقدّسه و قبل از آمدن یهود میفرمایند "انّ ربکم الجلیل قد شرّف بقدومه دیاره". در مطلع یکی از اشعار خود حضرت بهاء الله میفرمایند "هذا ذکر ما ظهر فی سنة ستّین فی ایّام الله المقتدر المهیمن العزیز العلیم. اذا قد فتح ابواب الفردوس و طلع غلام القدس بثعبان مبین فیا بشری هذا غلام الخلد قد جاء بهاء معین". این مصرع اخیر با کلمات "هذا غلام الخلد" بمرّات عدیده تکرار میشود. و جمال قدم خود را با آن جوان جاوید که در اشعیاء ذکر شده تطبیق مینمایند.

در سوره هیکل نیز حضرت بهاء الله میفرمایند "و زیّناك بطراز نفسی و القینا علیك کلمتی لتحکم فی الملك کیف تشاء". بعد میفرمایند "ان ابتعث باذن من لدنّا مرایاء مستحکیات و حروفات عالیات لیحکینّ لیحکینّ عن سلطانك و قدرتك و یدللن عن اقتدارك و عظمتك و یکنّ مظاهر اسمائك بین العالمین. انّا جعلناك مبدء المرایاء و مبدعهنّ کما بدئناهنّ منك اوّل مرّة و نعیدك الی نفسی کما بدئناك. انّ ربّك لهو الغالب المقتدر القدیر. نبّیء المرایا حین ظهورنّ بان لا یستکبرنّ علی موجدهنّ و خالقهنّ حین ظهوره و لا تغرّنهنّ الریاسة عن الخضوع بین یدی الله العزیز الجمیل. قل انتنّ یا ایّتها المرایا قد خلقتنّ بامری و بعثتنّ بارادتی ایّاکنّ ان تکفرنّ بآیات ربّی و تکنّ من الذینهم ظلموا و کانوا من الخاسرین. و تتمسکنّ بما عندکنّ و تفتخرنّ بارتفاع اسمائکنّ ینبغی لکنّ بان تنقطعنّ عمن فی السموات و الارض کذلك قدّر من لدن مقتدر قدیر)".

چنانچه ان ذات غیب الهی چون جوان جاودانی و پدر آسمانی و شاه دوستی و آشتی در آن رستاخیز پدیدار میشود و بصفت یفعل ما یشاء و یحکم ما یرید یعنی مشیّت اوّلیه مبدء و شارع یك مدنیّت تازه میشود پرتو خود را بر مرایای مستحکیه میافکند و آنانرا درخشان میکند. ولی این مرایای مستحکیه باید از شؤونات ارضیّه خود را پاك و منزّه دارند و ریاست و قدرت ظاهره خود را فریب ندهد و بآنچه سزاوار نیست وادار نکند.

در کتاب گوهر یکتا مذکور است (ص ۲) که "یکی از یاران بحضور مبارك (حضرت عبد البهاء) عریضه نگاشته میپرسد که در کتاب اشعیاء بشارت است که پس از هیکل میثاق طفلی طفلی زمامدار و راهنمای اهل ایمان خواهد بود آیا این طفل متولّد شده و موجود است؟ و نیز از فحوای بیانات دکتور یونسخان معلوم است که ایشان چنین سؤالی را بخاطر خود نمیگذرانیده و نیز از وجود لوح منیعی که در جواب سؤال کننده نازل گشته و ذیلا درج میشود در آن سنوات ایشانرا اطّلاعی نبوده است. "هو الله یا مة الله ذلك الطفل

مولود و موجود و سیکون له من امره عجب تسمعین به فی الاستقبال و تشاهدینه باکمل صورة و اعظم موهبة و اتمّ کمال و اعظم قوّة و اشدّ قدرة یتلئلأ وجهه تلالؤ یتنوّر به الافاق فلا تنسی هذه الکیفیّة ما دمت حیّا لانّ لها آثار علی ممرّ الدهور و الاعصار و علیك التحیّة و الثناء .عع " .

اوّلا در امر بهائی احادیث مقبول نیست . و این خطارا خود نگارنده نسبت باحمد سهراب میدهد و علّت طرد او ذکر میکند . میگوید که احمد سهراب روایاتی از حضرت عبد البهاء نقل کرده و مستند نموده در صورتی که آن جائز نیست. حال خود نگارنده این خطارا میکند . چونکه اکثر کتاب خود مستند بر روایات و یادداشت و خاطرات خود و افراد دیگر است . و این باطل است بخصوص در این موضوع که مقابل آن نصوص صریحه حضرت بهاء الله است چنانچه دیده شد . ثانیا ــ کلمه "بعد از میثاق" افزوده شده و چنین تحدید در اشعیاء موجود نیست و این تشخیص "طفل" را بکلّی تغییر میدهد .سوّم ــ اشعیاء ان طفل یا غلام و "فرزند" را "خدای توانا" و "پدر جاودان" و شاه اشتی و دوستی" نیز مینامد یعنی شارع ان مدنیّت جهانگیر. جوانی و فرزندی را صفت جسمانی نمیتوان داد چنانچه نگارنده میدهد . "خداونده توانا" و "پدر جاوید ان" حقیقتیست صرف الهی و روحانی . لم یلد و لن یولد است . تطبیق چنین حقیقت بحضرت شوقی افندی ایشانرا در ردیف شموس حقیقت مانند حضرت باب و حضرت بهاء الله مینماید . در وقتی که ایشان از مرایای مستحکیه بودند در ردیف حضرت عبد البهاء . ایشان بکلمه شمس حقیقت خلق شدند و از او فیض بردند . چهارم ــ در مدّتی که بنده حضور حضرت شوقی افندی بخدمت مشغول بودم یاد ندارم که ایشان در کلامی یا بیانی یا نوشته ای خودرا ان طفل یا در مصاف شموس حقیقت ذکر کردند و نام خودرا "خداوند توانا" و "پدر جاویدان" و "شاه دوستی و اشتی" یعنی شارع و مبدء مدنیّت تازه ای میانگاشتند . و همچنین میشود گفت که مقصود حضرت عبد البهاء از جواب که " ارتفاع امر در دست اوست " روح جاویدان حضرت بهاء الله است که همواره پرتو خودرا بر مرایای مستحکیه میافکند . و آن پرتو حضرت شوقی افندیرا خلق جدید نمود و برگزید و "غصن ممتاز" نمود .گمان میکنم که روح حضرت شوقی افندی از این غلوّ نگارنده بغایت بیزار است .

ایمان بمشرق وحی فقط ممیّز بین بهائی و غیر بهائیست.

ایمان شامل هم علم و هم عمل بموجب ان معرفت است . فرق بین جماد و نبات و حیوان از یك طرف و مؤمن از طرف دیگر این استت که مؤمن اوّل شعور بتجلّی شمس حقیقت میکند و بعد بپرتو او انگیخته میشود و فعلا آن نوررا انعکاس میکند . مثلا چون مصدر وحی الهی و مصدر کلّ الخیر ایمان بحضرت باب و حضرت بهاء الله است این خیر مایه رستگاری افراد نمیشود مگر انکه هم معرفت آن مصدر واضح و نمایان گردد و هم کلام او نشئه تازه در هوش او ایجاد کند و در رفتار او بظهور رسد . چنین ایمان حیات روحانی و فکری و فرهنگی میبخشد و گفتار و کردار افرادرا درست و سزاوار مینماید .

در وصایای خود حضرت عبد البهاء چنین ایمانرا ممیّز بین بهائی و غیر بهائی مینمایند و اعتراف فردرا یگانه

دلیل برآن قرار میدهند . حتّی قبول ولایترا درهمان سطح نمیگذارند . چنین قبولرا از نتایج آن ایمان میدانند . ولایت فقط مرآت مستحکی از شمس حقیقت است و مخلوق و از عالم امکان . حقیقت مطلق و قائم بالذات نیست که چنانچه دیده شد "میزان" ایمان گردد . گناه حقیقی انحراف از شمس حقیقت است و انکار تجلّی او . گناه ازل آن بود که فرق بین شمس حقیقت و مرایای مستحکی از او نگذاشت . و چون شمس حقیقت بطور حضرت بهاء الله ظاهر شد بمرآتّیت خود گروید و اورا انکار کرد . و چون خودرا از مصدر وحی الهی دور کرد ارزشی در او باقی نماند . حوّلم یلد و لن یولد اشت . علاقه برادرانه در انجا موردی ندارد . همچنین علّت گمراهی ناقضان عهد حضرت بهاء الله آن بود که پس از صعود مبارک نظر بخویشی و وراثت جسمانی نمودند نه بخواست آفریننده که ولایترا در حضرت عبد البهاء مشخّص فرمود . چون اعراض نمودند و ولایترا قبول نکردند آن نور الهی از انان مقطوع گشت و معدوم شدند .

لوح حضرت بهاء الله در خصوص آینده ابناء خود و مستقبل آنان .

میفرمایند " و امّا ما سئلت عن ابنی فاعلمهانّ ابنائی ان یتبعون احکام الله و لا یتجاوزون عمّا حدّد فی البیان کتاب الله المهیمن القیّوم و یامرون انفسهم و انفس العباد بالمعروف و ینهون عن المنکر و یشهدون بما شهد الله فی محکم ایاته المبرم المحتوم و یؤمنون بمن یظهره الله فی یوم الذی یحصی زمن الاوّلین و الاخرین و فیه کلّ علی الله ربّهم یعرضون و لن یختلفوا فی امر الله و لن یتعدّوا عن شرعه المقدّر المسطور اذا فاعلموا بانّهم اوراق شجرة التوحید و اثمارها و بهم تمطر السحاب و ترتفع الغمام بالفضل ان انتم توقنون و هم عزّة الله بینکم و اهل بیته فیکم و رحمته علی العالمین ان انتم تعلمون . و منهم تهبّ نسمة الله علیکم و تمرّ علی المقرّبین ارياح عزّ محبوب . و هم قلم الله و امره و کلمته بین بریّته و بهم یاخذ و یعطی ان انتم تفقهون . و بهم اشرقت الارض بنور ربّك و ظهرت آیات فضله علی الذینهم بایات الله لا یجحدون . اذا من اذاهم فقد اذانی و من اعرض عنهم فقد اعرض عن صراط الله المهیمن القیّوم . فسوف تجد اعراض المعرضین و استکبارهم علینا و بغیهم علی انفسنا من دون بیّنة ولا کتاب محفوظ. قل یا قوم انّهم لایات الله فیکم ایّاکم ان تجادلوا بهم و لا تقتلوهم و لا تکوننّ من الذین یظلمون و لا یشعرون . و هم اسراء الله فی ارضه و وردوا تحت ایدی الظالمین فی هذا الارض التی وقعت خلف جبال مرفوع . کلّ ذلك ورد علیهم حین الذی کانوا صغراء فی الملك و لم یکن لهم من ذنب بل فی سبیل الله القادر المقتدر العزیز المحبوب . و الذی منهم یظهر بالفطرة یجری الله من لسانه آیات قدرته و هو ممّن خصّه الله علی امره انّه ما من اله الّا هو له الخلق و الامر و انّا کلّ بامره آمرون .

و نسال الله بان یوفّقهم علی طاعته و یرزقهم ما یرضی به فؤادهم و افئدة الذینهم الی [illegible]شطر الله هم فی کلّ حین یتوجّهون . و یتجاوز عن جریراتهم و یجعلهم من الذین یتوارثون جنّة الفردوس من لدی الله العزیز المهیمن القیّوم . کذلك مننّا علیك فی هذا اللوح و کشفنا لك ما ستر عن دونك فضلا من لدنّا علیك و علی

الذینهم بهدایة الله فی هذا الفجر هم مهتدون . و انّك انت فاحفظ هذا الوح کمینك ایّاك ان تکشف لاحد الّا لاهله .کذلك یامرك امر الله بما هو المکنون ولا تجاوز عمّا امرت به لانّا وجدنا ملا البیان اشدّ احتجابا عن ملل الارض الّا من شاء ربّك .کذلك احصسنا الامر ان انتم تحصون .و نسال الله بان یوفقهم علی امره لیخرقوا الحجبات و یخرجوا عن خلف السحاب بسلطان من لدی الله المقتدر القدّوس....... ."

از تاریخ نزول این لوح مبارك که اوائل ظهور بوده قریب صد سال گذشته است و فعلا انچه فرمودند تحقّق یافته . هریك از ابناء و نیز ابناء ابنائشان چون مرآتی ایّامی در این جهان بسر بردند . و جمیع مورد رحمت منبسطه الهی بودند و امکان ابراز صفات یزدانی داشتند .بعضی از ان پرتو بهره بردند و درخشیدند و بعضی از آن اعراض کردند و فریب شؤونات ارضیّه خوردند .در هرمورد محك حقیقی صحّت ایمانشان بحضرت باب و حضرت بهاء الله بوده و هست و خواهد بود . و "میزان" و داور شان نیز انان هستند .

ورقات ان شجره مبارکه و اتّهامشان بقلّت ایمان

دانش و آزادی در متابعت آن مورد خطاکاریرا ایجاد میکند . چهکه امکان قبول و یا اعراض را فراهم میآورد . دانا ان است که گناه خودرا میبیند و بان اعتراف میکند و پشیمان میشود . حال اگر حضرت عبد البهاء در شان مناجاتهای خود را جائز الخطا میدانستند طبعا صبایای ایشان خودرا معصوم و بیگناه نمیپنداشتند . بخصوص وقتی که پدر ناصح مشفق انان از این عالم درگذشته بود . والده مرحومه ورقه مبارکه مثلا در وصیّتنامه خود به قصورات خود معترفند و از درگاه الهی مغفرت میطلبند . این شعور که والده بکمال وضوح در وصیّتنامه خود بیان میکنند یقینا یك از خواهران ایشان نیز داشتند اگر چه مستندی از ان باقی نمانده .همه خودرا از عالم امکان میدانستند و لذلك جائز الخطا . ولی چنین امکانیّت فتوری در ایمان احداث نمیکند .بلکه هرچه ایمان و دانش شدیدتر است انسان بخطایای خود واقفتر میگردد و پشیمانتر میشود وبهدایت الهی خودرا نیازمندتر مییابد . جاهل است انکه خودرا جائز الخطا نمیداند .

در کتاب گوهر یکتانه مذکور است (ص۱۸۲) "بعقیده این کمینه عداوت اعضاء عائله جمال اقدس ابهی با مرکز عهد الهی و سبب دوری بازماندگان ایشان از حضرت غصن ممتاز مربوط بوقایع فوری بعد از صعود نبوده بلکه علل اصلیه انرا باید زمانی جلوتر در ایّام بغداد جستجو نمود ".یعنی چنانچه ازل حین ظهور شمس حقیقت باو اقبال نکرد بلکه اعراض نمود بهمین نوع صبایای حضرت عبد البهاء بر حضرت شوقی افندی قیام نمودند و مخالفت کردند . بعد میگوید "نقض عهد در عائله مبارکه مانند عشقه ای بود که بر حول شجره مبارکه پیچیده میخواست آنرا بالمرّه خشك نماید بهرجا که پنجه انداخت شاخه را مانع از نمو گردید بدین سبب است که تعدادی از نفوسی که طائف حول بودند و خدمت میکردند و حتّی منشی گری داشتند چون با نقض عهد اعضای عائله مربوط شدند از میان رفتند و هر هنگامی که عضوی از اعضاء عائله طرد شد آنانهم قرب جوار غصن ممتاز را و خدمتگذاری آستان مقدّس را گذارده بپیستگان خود ملحق شدند و برخی از همه چیز بستند و باینگونه اشخاص توجّه نموده براه زیستی پیش گرفتند " (ص ۱۸۲) .

خوشبختانه چند سال قبل بمناسبت تقدیم قسمی از حصّه مرحوم والده ورقهٔ مبارکه طوبی خانم جهت مدرسه عدسیّه عکس وصیّتنامه ایشانرا خدمت محفل روحانی ایران ارسال داشتم . در آن میگویند " دیگر اینفانیه بر خود لازم دانسته که امتثالا لامر مبارک اینچند کلمه را در آخر ایّام خود بنگارم و اعتقادات صمیمهٔ خود را اظهار دارم و آن اینکه جمال مبارک روحی و حقیقتی لتراب عتبته الفدا مظهر کلّیه الهیّه و مهبط حقیقت ربّانیّه و حضرت عبد البها مرکز عهد و پیمان و غصن اعظم او و مولای کلّ و بعد از صعود او بملکوت ابها حضرت شوقی افندی مقتدای و ولی و جانشین او بوده و خواهد بود اینست اعتقاد قلبی و وجدانی اینفانیه و ذات حقّ شاهد و گواه که هیچ وقت مرا جز این اعتقادی نبوده و نخواهد بود دیگر تا فضل و لطف حق چه کند " .

ایّام قلعه بندی در عکّا حاجی میرزا حسن خراسانی حضرت ورقهٔ مبارکه علیا و حرم و سائر ورقاترا بقاهره دعوت میکند . فقط والده جهت خدمتگذاری حضرت عبد البها در عکا میمانند . روزی ناگاه داخل اوطاق مبارک شدند دیدند که غرق در کتابت چیزی هستند . چون ایشانرا دیدند اوّل منزعج شدند . بعد فرمودند که روزگار دشوار شده و دور نیست که بر من آسیبی رسد . این ورقه وصیّتیست که مینویسم . شوقی افندی هنوز طفل است ولی چون برشد میرسد اموراترا در دست خواهد گرفت و بر شماها سرپرستی خواهد کرد و مایه اطمینان شماها خواهد شد . ولی در این بابت باحدی ذکری نکن . لذا از قبل میدانستند که بعد از حضرت عبد البها حضرت شوقی افندی ولّی امر خواهند بود . ومرا از طفولیّت بر آن اساس پرورش دادند وبآن مسلک بزرگ کردند . و روزی که حضرت شوقی افندی مرا طرد کردند حضرت والده صراحتا ببنده فرمودند که اگر قصور تو بر اساس ایمان بولایت بود من اوّل کسی بودم که تورا از خانه بیرون کنم .

باری عقائدی که در وصیّتنامه حضرت والده مذکور است و شیوه‌ای که پیشه گرفتند منحصر بایشان نبود . عقائد صمیمانه هر یک از ورقات مبارکه بود . و بموجب آن اطفال خورد بزرگ کردند و تربیت نمودند . هیچ یک از انان ولایت حضرت شوقی افندیرا انکار نکرد و نمیکند . واگر دور حضرت ولیّ امر جمع نشدند علّت این بوده که حین صعود مبارک طفل بودند و مشغول بدرس . و چون برشد رسیدند بهائیان از انها دوری جستند و در محافل خود راه ندادند . ثانیا در وصیّتنامه خود حضر عبد البها نمیفرمایند که آنان باید در حیفا بمانند بلکه میگویند که چون تلامیذ حضرت مسیح باید در عالم پراکنده شوند و هر یک در دیاری بخدمتی مشغول شود . خدمت بشخص ولیّ امر وظیفه ایادی منتخب است نه افراد افنان و اغصان . مگر انکه بهائیان انانرا برای آن وظیفه انتخاب کنند .

صعود مبارک حضرت عبد البها نه فقط دردناک بود بصورت ناگهانی رخ داد . نیم شب والده را از خواب بیدار کردند که این خبررا بایشان بدهند . این بحرانی بود که اعصاب ضعیف ایشان تحمّل نکرد . گذشته از این وصول حضرت شوقی افندی چند روز بعد و بیتابی ایشان حالت والده را بدتر کرد . بصورتی اعصاب قلب و معده ایشان ضعیف شد که کاملا بستری گشتند و سالها بمعالجه و انزوا وادار نمود . اوّل در حیفا و بعد در مصر و بعد در ایطالیا و سویس بمعالجه پرداختند ولی ثمری حاصل نشد تا ناچار بحیفا مراجعت نمودند .

اکثر حکما بایشان گفتند که چون مرض ایشان بر اثر بحران روانی بود باید ببحرانی دیگر زائل شود. ولی از نتیجه اطمینان کامل نتوان داشت. در حیفا بستری ماندند تا بنده طرد شدم و حضرت شوقی افندی امر دادند که از حیفا رحلت کنم. والده علت کدورت حضرت شوقی افندی را میدانستند لذا از بنده تبرّی نکردند. لذا ایشانرا نیز طرد نمودند. ایشان و اخوان همه پاسوز نافرمانی بند شدند. نه نقض عهدی کردند و نه از ایشان شخصا بروز کرد. و پس از طرد در همان تنهائی ماندند تا از عالم رفتند. و نصیحتشان به بنده دائما این بود که اگر خدمتی از دستم نمیآید جهد کنم که ضرری حاصل نگردد و مایه اختلاف در امر نشوم. و این پیشه من بوده و هست.

سر سلسله مرایای مستحکیه از شمس حقیقت که "بالفطره" آیات قدرت الهی و موهبت ربّانی از گفتار و کردارش ظاهر و نوابان شد حضرت عبد البهاء بودند. آن وجود مقدّس سرمشق کمالات انسانی گشتند. ولی در ضمن ان سرمشق را چنان بلند نمودند که بعد از خود در ملئرین شعور ناقابلیّت و ضعف ایجاد کرد. متابعت آن سرمشق بار گرانی شد برای نفوسی که زمام امور را بدست گرفتند. علی الخصوص بر خود حضرت شوقی افندی. و این را کرارا از خود ایشان شنیدم. مثلا در نامهای که در کتاب گوهر یکتا درج شده (ص ۱۱٤) "از اینکه مجبورم گاهگاهی حتّی برای مدّت مدیدی از میدان خدمت کناره جویم بینهایت محزونم غیبت طولانی این عبد و عدم موفقیّت در خدمت را احبّای عزیز الهی نباید حمل باین نمایند که بعلّت مخالفت و بی وفائیها و عدم رضایتهای خارجی است البتّه این حال امور را فلج میسازد ولی باید این را هم در نظر گیرند که این عبد خویشتن را لایق این مقام نمیدانم و قدرت انجام وظائف را در خود نمیبینم".

سه نقطه مهم در این چند کلمه ذکر میفرمایند. اوّلا نبودن هیچ گونه "مخالفت و بی وفائی و عدم رضائیتهای خارجی". دوّم که در امور "فلجی" حاصل شده بود. سوّم اینکه خود را "لایق این مقام نمیدانم". نقطه اوّلرا لزوم بشرح نیست. کلام واضح است. نفوسی که اداره امر را برعهده خود گرفته بودند مخاص بودند و جز صیانت امر را نمیخواستند. بلکه اطمینان کاملی که از ورقات داشتند چنان بود که شوقی افندی میتوانستند بخاطر ارام اوقات خود را در اروپا بگذرانند. قریب یك سال ایشان و بنده در سویس بودیم. بنده برسم منشیگری ولی مکاتبتی نبود که بان بپردازم. محلّ اقامتمان اوّل در "تریته" در پانسیونی بس حقیر نزدیك ایستگاه راه آهن. این مکانرا انتخاب نمودند چون هم "اوریانت اکسپرس" در انجا توقّف مینمود و لذا مرکز مواصلات آسان و هم دور دست بود و از مراکز آمد وشد بر کنار. روزهارا بمطالعه و تنیس میگذراندیم تا روزی مسیو هیپولیت دریفوس بدستو ضیائیه خانم وارد شد که جستجو از احوالشان کند. بمناسبت روابط دوستی صمیمانه که باایشان داشتند حضرت شوقی افندی اورا پذیرائی نمودند و یك روز با ایشان گذراندند. در بین صحبت ایشان ذکر کردند که یاران پریشان احوال ایشان هستند و چند نفر از احبّای ایران در جستجوی ایشان هستند. حضرت شوقی افندی از این خبر منزعج شدند و چند روز بعد محلّ اقامت خود را به "اینترلاکن" نقل کردند. کوههای ان قسم سویسرا بغایت جالب دیدند و لذا بپیاده روی اوقات خود را میگذراندند. من نیز در معیّت ایشان بودم

قریب ده ماه یا یك سال بهمین منوال گذشت تا خود ضیائیّه خانم با قدسی افندی وارد سویس شدند و ایشانرا با اصرار و الحاح بحیفا عودت دادند. این دوری شکی نیست مایه "شلل" در امور امریّه شد و علّت نگرانی افراد احبّا. و سبب اصلی آن دوری چنانچه خود حضرت شوقی افندی میفرمایند این بود که "این عبد خویشتنرا لایق این مقام نمیدانم و قدرت انجام وظائف را در خود نمیبینم".

حضرت عبد البها زمام ولایترا وقتی در دست گرفتند که شجر بارور شده بودند. در غایت رشد و مجرّب گشته بودند. شکنجه اسارت دربدری هر گونه آسیبی در راه امر چشیده بودند و کاملا آماده کار. در عکّا و در عالم بهائی برازنده و دارای شیفتگان بسیار. هنوز ریاسترا در دست نگرفته مشار بالبنان بودند. شمس حقیقت غروب کرده بود ولی قمر ولایت در اوج تابش و درخشنائی. تاریکی بین این دو مرحله راه نیافت که مایه نگرانی گردد. ولی در مورد حضرت شوقی افندی چنین نشد. ایشان هنوز هلالی بودند که منبعد باید نور کسب کند تا درخشان گردد. و این مطلب بر حضرت عبد البها پنهان نبود. باین سبب در وصایای خود میفرمایند که باید کلّ جهد نمایند غبار کدری بر خاطر نورانیش ننشیند تا شجر بارور گردد. افراد عائله مبارکه این سفارشرا دائما در نظر داشتند و انرا اوّل وظیفه خود میدانستند و بقدر امکان میکوشیدند تا تحقّق یابد. مسئله خویشی و فرزندی نبود. مسئله تدعیم و تقویت ولایت بود. ولی موارد "غبار کدر" چون در هر حقیقت امکانیّه فراوان بود.

قبل از صعود مبارك ورقه مبارکه منوّر خانم در پورتسعید مسکن داشتند و همسر ایشن آقای احمد یزدی در انجا بتجارت مشغول بودند. بعد او صعود مبارك ورقه مبارکه ضیائیّه خانم از ایشان طلبیدند که دستگاه تجارتی خودرا بهم زده بحیفا بیایند تا در امور امریّه مورد مشورت شوند. هر دو بکمال افتخار این پیشنهادرا قبول کردند و تجارتخانه خودرا بسته بحیفا آمدند.

باری برای ادای این وظیفه موارد انسانی در دسترس عائله چندان نبود. اوّل کسی که بخاطرشان آمد مرحوم آقای عزیز الله خان بهادر بود که در ایّام حضرت عبد البها بخدمت مشغول گشتند و بامور امریّه باخبر بودند و مورد اطمینان کامل و بسبب شللی که در دست حاصل نموده بودند بایران مراجعت کرده بودند. ورقات اورا احضار کردند و ایشان بجان و دل قبول کردند. ایشان مدتند ایّام مبارك بکمال خلوص بوظیفه خود پرداختند و استقامت نمودند تا انکه مسئله اختلاف با حکومت ایران در خصوص مدرسه تربیت پیش آمد و بعد مسئله تعداد بهائیان ایران برای انتخابات محافل روحانی. در این دو موضوع عزیز الله خان با حضرت شوقی افندی هم رای نبودند. میگفتند که تعداد درست نمیتوان گرفت چه‌که عده زیاد برای مصالح شخصی اظهار عقیده نخواهند کرد و ایمان خودرا پنهان خواهند داشت. و بقلّت عدد بهائیان شکوه امر خواهد کاست. و در خصوص مدرسه تربیت میگفتند که باید در چنین موارد با حکومت مسالم بود. بنده نیز همین نظریّه را داشتم ولی اصرار در عقیده خود نکردم چه‌که ولیّ امررا مسؤل میدانستم. این اصرار زیاد از طرف عزیز الله خان مایه رنجش قلب مبارك شد و بجدائی منجرّ گشت. ولکن ابدا مسئله سستی ایمان بامر و قلّت خلوص بمرکز

ولایت نبود. در نظر دارم روزی که حضرت شوقی افندی عازم سفر بودند و قلمهای نی میخواستند با خود ببرند حسب معمول چند عدد به بنده التفات فرمودند که بعزیزالله داده بطلبم ایشان انرا بتراشند. عزیزالله خان که در باغچه نشسته بودند این قلمهارا تراشیدند و بعد این بیت شعر را بر ورقی نگاشته طلبیدند که انرا نیز حضور تقدیم نمایم. واین بیت از اشعار حافظ است که میگوید مطربان اهسته ران کارام جانم میرود وان دل که با خود داشتم با دلستانم میرود. این در ایامی بود که بظاهر شوقی افندی از ایشان مکدر بودند. ولی این شعر موقف عزیزالله را درست مینمایاند. و شکی ندارم که این شعور روحانیرا با خود بان عالم برد.

باری سه ورقات مبارکه یعنی ضیائیه خانم و روحا خانم و منور خانم بکمال اتحاد و یگانگی و ایمان بامر و مرکز ولایت وظیفه خودرا انجام میدادند و حضرت شوقی افندی از آنان کمال اطمینانرا داشتند. و باین سبب میتوانستند اکثر اوقات خودرا در سویس بگذرانند و فقط بنده و یا قدسی افندیرا در معیت خود قبول فرمایند. چون حضرت بهاء الله اظهار امر فرمودند ازل بر ضدیت برخواست. و همچنین پس از خواندن کتاب عهد حضرت بهاء الله فورا ناقضین اعراض نمودند و بدشمنی بر مرکز میثاق برخواستند. ولی پس از صعود حضرت عبد البها احدی از افراد عائله بچنین خیانتی قیام نکرد. احدی بر اعراض بر نخواست. بلکه هریک بنحوی و بمقدار قابلیت و استعداد خود بخدمت پیشرفت امر فعلا پرداخت. ودر آن ادامه کردند تا حضرت شوقی افندی توانستند بتدریج امور رادر دست خود گیرند. مثلاخود بنده از سنه صعود مبارك حضرت عبد البها الی سنه ۱۹۳۷ حضرت شوقی افندی کمال اطمینان از ایمان و خلوص نیت بنده داشتند اگرچه در طبیعت دگرگون بودیم. ایشان فرز و چابك و بنده یوشکار. ایشان در امور دقیق و من متساهل. موارد ناهمواری بین ما زیاد بود ولکن هیچ وقت در ایمان و خلوص بنده بامر مبارك و ولایت شکی نداشتند. پس از مراجعت بنده از سفر دوم بامریکا یعنی یك دو ماه قبل از طرد بنده و بی پیشنهادی و ذکری از طرف بنده روزی ببنده فرمودند که اگر میخواهم در ایام تابستان که خودشان باروپا میروند بند باطراف بتبلیغ بروم. اگر در ایمان و یا در خلوص بنده شکی داشتند چنین اظهاری نمیفرمودند. اگر حسدی در قلب داشتم سالها قبل بروز میکرد. همین حقیقت حال سائر افراد عائله بوده و هست. نه احدی خائن بود و نه از احدی سستی ایمان بولایت حضرت شوقی افندی ظاهر شد. پس از وفات ایشان نیز از احدی از افراد عائله خصومتی پیدا نشد که بر وحدت امر ضرری حاصل شود. و معتقدات بنده در کتبی که نوشته ام نمایان است.

در کتاب گوهر یکتا مذکور است که "ایمان و اطاعت دو عامل بزرگ در روابط انسانی است که انسان را بخدای عالمیان و مظهر ظهور و مرکز امر او مؤمن و مرتبط مینماید لذا ولو انکه انسان از دیدار کامل محروم و ایمان هم نداشته باشد بایستی اطاعت کند" (ص ۱۸۲). در این چند کلمه نگارنده فرق بین ایمان و اطاعت میگذارد و اطاعت را اسبقیت میدهد. آیا چنین است. حضرت عبد البها در وصایای خود نسبت بولی امر و بیت عدل میفرمایند که هرکس انانرا اطاعت کرد خداوند عالمیانرا اطاعت نموده.

شکی نیست که اطاعت و انقیاد از لوازم ضروریّه هر مجتمع انسانیست . و در جمیع ادیان الهی اهمیّت داده شده در آن تردیدی نیست. بی اطاعت رؤسای امر وحدت امر حاصل نمیشود . ولکن بر ایمان اسبقیّت ندارد . چنانچه دیده شد در آغاز کتاب اقدس عرفان مشرق وحی یعنی ایمان بشمس حقیقت قبل از هر چیز میآید . اوّل با معرفت و ایمان انسان قلب خود را رو بمظهر ظهور کند تا تجلّی رحمانی بر آن جلوه کند و انرا درخشان نماید و بعد به سنن و قوانینی که وضع شده اطاعت کند و بحیّز فعل درآرد . گذشته از این خود شمس حقیقت یعنی جمال قدم چنانچه دیده شد در سوره هیکل و لوح شمس حقیقت و لوح بافتخار شیخ سلمان اطاعت را مشروط میفرمایند . واضحا میفرمایند که مرایای مستحکیه باید خود اوّل از شؤونات ارضیّه پاک و منزّه شوند تا نور الهی در آنان جلوه کند و بعد اطاعت طلبند . در جمیع سازمانهای سیاسی و اجتماعی این مبدا مجری است. اطاعت قوانین و رسوم آن سازمان وقتی واجب است که با ناموس اساسی و شارع آن سازمان هموار است .کلام شمس حقیقت مانند دستوریست که طبیعت و مقصود و هدف مدنیّت را برای اقلا هزار سال مینهد .این کلام الهیست و اطاعت آن واجب و بی هیچ چون چرا .قوانین و رسومی که نمایندگان یک مملکت میگذارند وقتی واجب الاطاعه است که مستند و متمد از اساسنامه کشور باشد . و الّا باطل است و متابعت آن گناه .در چنین مورد هم میزان و مقیاس آن قوانین و هم داور و دادگاه دیگر از خود مجلس شوری و رئیس آن است. اگر چنین نباشد در مدّت کمی طبیعت و مقصود و هدف اصلی شارع ان اساسنامه بهم میخورد و فراموش میشود . وحدت و پیشرفت آن مدنیّت منوط بر آن است. در جمیع ادیان گذشته این مبدا واضح و مبرهن شده . هر وقت رؤسای ادیان برای مقاصدی مربوط بریاست خود خواست خداوندیرا یعنی وحی آسمانیرا برکنار گذاشتند و فقط اطاعت و انقیاد را محک دانستند آن دین رو باضمحلال گذاشت و کم کم نفوذ روحانی آن کاسته شد تا محو گشت.

علّت طردها

حال قریب نیم قرن است که از صعود حضرت عبد البها گذشته . چه شده ؟ نفوس زیادی طرد شدند و بسیاری مطرود ماندند ـ آیا علّت آن بوده که شمس حقیقت را انکار کردند و یا انکه بر ولایت حضرت عبد البها و حضرت شوقی افندی اعراض نمودند ؟ و یا آنکه برای اسباب دیگر که مربوط بمصالح دنیویّه و شخصی بوده ؟ چنانچه در آغاز ذکر شد گروهی را بنده تشویق کردم و سبب شدم که مجدّدا داخل امر شدند در حینی که خود مطرود بودم .ابدا در این امر موفّق نمیشدم اگر علّت سستی ایمان بود .ایمان راسخ انها مرا بر اصرار تشویق میکرد. میدیدم که حیف است چنین نفوس مؤمنی از نور یزدانی دور باشند . و چون در ایمانشان فطوری نبود بعد از رجوع بخدمات شایانی موفّق شدند .در اکثر موارد علّت جدائی "شؤونات ارضیّه" بود که ربطی بایمان نداشت. مثلا قدسی افندی که از ایّام طفولیّت همشیر حضرت شوقی افندی بود و بعد از آن مونس و جلیس ایشان برای امری طفیف طرد شد .با اینکه کمال اطمینانرا در ایمان و اخلاص ایشان داشتند از او متغیّر شدند که جسارت

و اورا طرد نمودند . حکایت ایشان از قرار ذیل است. پس از انجام نخست جنگ جهانگیر پوسته ی مبارک زیاد شد و شخصی میطلبید جوان و امین که بآن بپردازد. قدسی افندی فرزند حاجی سیّد یحیی برادر حرم مبارک جوان بود و با ابویشان حجره تجارتی داشت . ایشان از هر حیث مناسب بودند و حضرت عبد البهاء اورا تعیین کردند. قدسی افندی این را خدمت امر پنداشت و بدل وجان قبول کرد . مزد او این بود که هر عصر مقرّرا حضور میرسید و بعنایتی مفتخر میشد . بعد از صعود در این کار ادامه داد و پوسته حضرت شوقی افندی و عائلهشانرا مقرّرا میرساند . شبی یکی از افراد آن عائله بملاحظهای از قدسی افندی طلبید که مکاتیب اورا بخود او دهد . قدسی افندی قبول نکرد و عذر خواست. اشتباه ایشان در این بود که بهمین اکتفا نکرده خواست از این وظیفه کاملا دوری جوید . لذا حضور شوقی افندی رفته طلبید که اورا از این کار معاف دارند . حضرت شوقی افندی از این درخواست بغایت مکدّر شدند چه که دیدند که پوسته خودشان بهم میخورد و مایه زحمت میشود . در این حال آشفتگی اورا طرد کردند . ولی قضیّه بهمین منتهی نشد . ابوی قدسی افندی جناب حاجی سیّد یحیی از فرزند خود نبریدند و گفتند که حضرت شوقی افندی نباید برای چنین امر طفیفی اورا از امر مبارك طرد نمایند . این اعتراض بگوش ولیّ امر رسید و ایشانرا بیشتر خشمناك نمود . اینرا اعتراض در صلاحیّتهای ولایت دانستند و لذا حاجی سیّد یحیی و افراد عائلهشانرا نیز طرد کردند . چندی بعد حاجی سید یحیی از این عالم درگذشت و بعد همسرشان صبیّه سلطان الشهدا وبعد دو فرزند شان . هنوز صبیّهشان خورشید خانم پیر و ناتوان و بیکس و تنها در حیفا هستند. و امنای امر در انجا نمیپرسند که گناه ایشان چیست. آیا ان عمل قدسی افندی مستوجب چنین عقاب بود .

قضیّه ورقه مبارکه ضیائیّه خانم

قضیّه هیچ یك از مطرودین که باآنان مذاکره نمودم و تشویق کردم که راجع شوند انقدر بنظر بنده مهم و منافی بامصالح امریّه و نیك نامی مرکز ولایت ~~نیست~~ نبوده مانند جدائی ورقه مبارکه ضیائیّه خانم . چون حکومت ایران اتباع خود را که بلبنان پناه آورده بودند بحیفا عودت داد بنده و فرزندم پرویز بدعوت ضیائیّه خانم چندی در منزل ایشان در دامنه کوه کرمل سکنی یافتیم تا انکه ان شخصی که خانه مرا تصرّف کرده تخلیه کند و پس دهد . در این مدّت اکثر صحبت ما در موضوع گذارشات امریّه بود . روزی جسارت کرده پرسیدم که چرا حضرت شوقی افندی چنانچه در افواه رواج است ایشانرا طرد کردند . عرض کردم که تاریخ شاید بگوید که روحی حسد برد و طوبی خانم طرفداری فرزند خود را کرد . اگرچه این مخالف حقیقت است و بهتان محض ولی موررّخین خواهند معقول دانست . و این چندان لطمه ای بر صیت امر نخواهد بود. ولی در خصوص طرد شما چه خواهند گفت. چه نوع انرا تفسیر خواهند کرد. فرمودند که حضرت شوقی افندی ایشانرا هیچ وقت طرد نکردند چنانچه فعلا شایع است معامله روحیّه خانم و خدمه بیت مبارك در ظلّ نظارت ایشان سبب شد که ایشان دوری جستند و جدائیرا ترجیح دادند . فرمودند که چون دختر ارشد حضرت عبد البهاء هستند و مادر حضرت شوقی افندی

مقامی دارا هستند که باید نیز در نظر گرفت. برای خود نباید ذلّت بپذیرند. بعد وقایعی ذکر کردند کلّ مدلّ بر اینکه موقف فوق طاقت بود. عرض کردم که این عذر کافی نیست. نیک نامی ولیّ امر مهمتر است. سزاوار ان بود که تحمّل کنید و پنهان دارید. بعد جسارت کردم و پرسیدم که علّت نقار با روحیّه خانم چه بود ؟

علّت نقار بین روحیّه خانم و ورقه مبارکه ضیائیّه خانم

چنانچه قبلا ذکر شد حضرت عبد البهاء در وصیّتنامه خود فرموده بودند که کل باید جهد نمایند تا غبار کدر بر خاطر نورانی حضرت شوقی افندی ننشیند "تا شجر بارور" گردند. قریب بیست سال از صعود مبارک گذشته بود و حضرت شوقی افندی کم کم امور را در دست خود گرفته بودند ولی هنوز "شجر بارور" نشده بودند. حضرت ورقه مبارکه علیا از این جهت بسیار نگران بودند و دائما ذکر میکردند. ولی قضیّه تأهّل ولیّ امر وظیفه شخصی والده ایشان بود. شوقی افندی علاقه صمیمانه خصوصی با مستر ماونتفرت ملز داشتند. و چون ایشان بالاضافه رئیس محفل روحانی امریکا بودند با کمال صراحت و یگانگی در مسائل مهمّ امری صحبت مینمودند و رای میطلبیدند. باین سبب هروقت در حیفا شرفیاب میشدند مدّتی میماندند. گمان میکنم که در اوائل سنه ۱۹۳۷ میلادی بود که ایشان برای دفعه آخر بزیارت آمدند. مسیز مارجوری مورتن نیز در حیفا بود. هر روز ظهر بر سر میز مذاکرات طولانی مینمودند ولی شب فقط بنده حاضر میشدم و از آنان پذیرائی میکردم. چندی بهمین منوال گذشت. شبی مستر میلز را بغایت محزون و نگران یافتم. و شنیدم که روز بعد عازم سفر است. معذرت خواست که سر شام حاضر نخواهد بود و باطاق خود رفت. از مسز مورتن پرسیدم که علّت پریشانی مستر میلز چیست. گفت که ورقه مبارکه ضیائیّه خانم هر دو را احضار فرمودند و در موضوع تأهّل ولیّ امر و رای احبّای امریکا استفسار فرمودند. مستر میلز جواب داد که در غرب اجمالا این موضوع را شخصی میدانند و احدیرا حقّ دخالت نمیدهند. لذا هرچه ولیّ امر تصمیم بگیرند جمیع خواهند قبول نمود. ولی چون ورقه مبارکه نام میری مکسولرا بردند و اورا پیشنهاد کردند هیچیک صواب ندید. و چون این موقف آنان نزد حضرت شوقی افندی ذکر شد ایشان بنهایت مکدّر شدند. و در وجود چنین کدورت بقای ایشان در حیفا مناسب نیست.

در سفر اوّل بنده بامریکا در ایّامی که بنده در گرین عکا گذراندم مسیس مکسول والده روحیّه خانم حکایتی از گذارشات صبیّه‌شان بمن نمودند که اگر با انچه من بعد حاصل شد منضمّ شود کاملا ثابت میکند که گریهای که مذکور شده ایشان نمودند بمناسبت زفاف دخترشان با ولیّ امر الله اشک سرور و سرافرازی نبود بلکه اشک حزن و اندوه و خجلت در ساحت قدس الهی و بیم انچه خواهد من بعد واقع شد و نتایج آن بر حضرت شوقی افندی و ولایت ایشان. و در مقابل چنین حزن و اندوه چگونه میتوانند چنین تاج افتخار را رد کنند و عدم رضایت خود را ابلاغ کنند. و نیز در سفر دوّم بنده بامریکا ایّامی که در واشنگتون میهمان مستر چارلز میسون ریمی بودم ایشان حکایتی از گذارشات روحیّه خانم به بنده ذکر کردند که واضح میکند ایشان نیز از چنین ازدواج

نبودند. و وقتی که خبر این زفاف منتشر شد خانمی بنام ادما بلوره یا مسز ادما بلمونت که اصلا سلکن امریکا بود و در انجا حضور حضرت عبد البهاء رسیده و ایمان آورده بود و چون از نژاد عرب بود با افراد عائله محبّت خصوص داشت این خانم در آن ایّام در بیروت بود و مشغول علاج. چون خبر این قران را شنید نزد یك یك از رفقات رفته اظهار تأسّف کرد و گفت از انجائی که مدّتی پرستار روحیّه خانم بوده از احوال ایشان درست مطّلع است و ممکن نیست ایشان از حضرت شوقی افندی حامله گردند. چندی بعد این خانم فوت شد ولی کلامشان تحقّق یافت. مقصود این است که بسیاری از انهئیکه روحیّه خانمرا درست میشناختند از این اقتران ناراضی بودند ولی جلرت ابدای رای نداشتند. والده و روحا خانم در آن زمان در بیروت بودند و از امر بظاهر دور. چیزی از دست انها برنمیآمد که اقدامی کنند. لذا ان گفته را نشنیده گرفتند. مسؤولیّت کاملا بر ضیائیّه خانم گذاشته شد و ایشان کلام ادما بلّوره را نمیتوانستند مستند محکم قرار دهند و بر آن اساس حکم قطعی کنند.

چندی گذشت و روحیّه خانم فعلا حامله نشدند. دکتور رحمت بك که از نژاد ترك ولی مقیم بیروت بود در آلمان تحصیل کرده متخصّص در امراض زنانه بود و مدیر آن شعبه در مریضخانه قشون و دانشکده پزشکی ترك. این دکتور عریضهای حضور حضرت شوقی افندی مینگارد و محرمانه خدمات خود را تقدیم مینماید. روحیّه خانم از فحص طبّی امتناع میکنند. مجدّدا دکتور عریضه عرض میکند و میگوید که ممکن است علّت از خود شوقی افندی باشد در چنین صورت باید خوراك مقوّی میل نمایند از جمله روزی ده تخم تازه. ولیّ امر جوابی عنایت نمیفرمایند ولی بوالده شان دستور العمل میدهند که چنین خوراکرا مهیّا کنند. و ایشان اطاعت میفرمایند. ولی مدّتی گذشت و اثری نبخشید. این علّت نگرانی ضیائیّه خانم شد. چه که تخم زیاد مایه امراض دیگر میشود. لذا از حضرت شوقی افندی طلبیدند که ایشانرا از این مسؤولیت معاف دارند و این وظیفه را خود روحیّه خانم بر عهده گیرند ایشان رفض کردند و گفتند که ورقه مبارکه نمیخواهند که ایشان حامله گردند. و این اساس نقار بین دو طرف شد. و علّت بدگمانی از طرف حضرت شوقی افندی. چند سال بعد در بیروت از روحنگیز خانم شنیدم که بالاخره حضرت شوقی افندی وادار داشتند که روحیّه خانم خود را نزد دکتوری فحص کند و دو دکتور ایشانرا فحص کردند و هر دو بالاجماع گفتند که با وجود علّتی در ایشان ممکن نیست حامله گردند. و از مصدر دیگر شنیدم که یکی از این دو دکتور یکی دکتور کستمرو پزشك مریضخانه ایطالیائی در حیفا در آن زمان بود و دیگر دکتور زاند یك پزشك امراض زنانه در دانشگاه عبری در اورشلیم.

باری میهمان ضیائیّه خانم ماندم تا حکومت اسرائیل منزل مرا از مغتصب یهود گرفت و به بنده پس داد. یك روز صبح خیلی زود ضیائیّه خانم به بنده منزل تشریف آوردند. آن اوّل و آخر دفعه ای بود که بچنین زیارت مفتخر شدم. مقصود شان این بود که با والده وداع فرمایند. ببنده فرمودند که کلام تورا صواب دیدم

و حال میخواهم بموجب آن عمل کنم و ببیت مبارک برگردم و بهر نوعی که ممکن است در جوار شوقی افندی باقی حیات خود را بگذرانم. پس از وداع با والده فعلا ببیت مبارک تشریف بردند. بعد معلوم شد که طلبیدند ورقه مبارکه منوّر خانم را که در آن ایّام در انجا اقامت داشتند ملاقات کنند و بواسطه ایشان پیغام خود را حضور برسانند. ولی چون روحیّه خانم از این ماجری شنید حضور عرض کرد که اگر والده خود را بپذیرفتید من میروم. حضرت شوقی افندی مصلحت چنان دیدند که از والده خود ببرّند و ایشانرا طرد کنند. ولی روحیّه خانم بآن اکتفا نکرد. حضور عرض کرد که چون ضیائیّه خانم آمدند منوّر خانم ایشانرا درآغوش گرفته بکمال محبّت ایشانرا پذیرفتند. و این دلیل است که هیچ وقت از ایشان قطعاً نبریده بودند. این موقف را بیشتر پرآشوب کرد لذا حضرت شوقی افندی منور خانم را نیز طرد کردند. و ایشان از آن روز مریض و بیکس در مریضخانه ایطالیائی ساکنند.

چمدان عرایض افراد عائله.

بنده تا دوازده سال پس از طرد حضور حضرت شوقی افندی لااقل سالی یک مرتبه عریضه‌ای عرض میکردم و اکثر اوقات شخصا ببیت مبارک میرساندم و چند مرتبه خود روحیّه خانم آمدند و مرا دیده خواهش رجوع مرا ردّ میکردند. همیشه در صدد بودم که بدانم اگر این عرایض را حضرت ولیّ امر میخوانند یا نه. روزی این مطلب را از ورقه مبارکه ضیائیّه خانم پرسیدم. فرمودند که غیر از تو نیز چنین عرایض عرض کرده. مثلا روحا خانم. حضرت شوقی افندی یک چمدان دارند مخصوص چنین مکاتیب که از افراد عائله رسیده و جمیع را محفوظ میدارند. ورقه مبارکه سپس فرمودند که خود ایشان نیز هر ماه شاید هر هفته عریضه مفصّلی مرقوم میدارند و انچه در دل دارند ناگفته نمیگذارند تا امور در ولیّ امر واضح گردد. نمیدانم اگر آن چمدان هنوز موجود است. اگر محفوظ مانده حکایت خوبیست از سرگذشت آن اشخاص و دردی که در دل داشتند. طرد انها از قلّت ایمان نبود. تحمّل و استقامت در بلایا خود دلیل بر ایمان راسخ انها بود. بیمشان آن بود که از این گزارشات لطمه‌ای بر امر مبارک رسد یا غبار کدری بر خاطر ولیّ امر رسد. سکوت عائله دلیل بر قوّت ایمان انان است نه قلّت آن. نمیخواستند که قضیّه ناقضین تکرار یابد و لطمه‌ای بر امر مبارک رسد. و اگر حال این موجز را معروض میدارم علّت این است که روحیّه خانم در کتاب خود یا بحقیقت پی نبرده اند و یا بقصدی شخصی قسمی از حقیقت را ذکر کرده اند و یا آن حقیقت را چنان معنی داده اند که اغراض خود را پیروی نمایند. کتمان چنین حقایق ناگفتنی بهتر بود. و الّا بیگناه از تحرّی حقیقت بیباک است.

باری علّت طرد اکثر چه از افراد عائله چه از سائر احبّا علاقه ای با اعراض ازل و ناقضین عهد و پیمان جمال قدم نداشته. جنانچه در "گوهر یکتا" وارد شده (ص ۱۸۲) ورقه مبارکه ضیائیّه خانم مادر ولیّ امر بودند و اوّل خانم در عالم بهائی ج. از کی حسد برند. خود مغبوط کل بودند. منوّر خانم از خود فرزندی

نداشتند که ولایترا برای او خواهند. هیچ یک از ورقات جز خدمت در ظلّ ولیّ امر مبارک نداشتند . عقائد روحیّه خانم در انچه میگویند مبنی بر تفسیراتیست که خود ایشان و در مصلحت خودشان بگذ ارشات میدهند . مقیاس بهائی بودن را ایمان بشمس حقیقت و مرایای مستحکیه از آن نمیدانند . مقیاس ایمانرا اطاعت کورکورانه و بیچون و چرا میدانند . چه که فقط بچنین اطاعت اغراض خود پیش میرود . ایمان بشمس حقیقت میطلبد که اوّل ولات امور خودشان مرآت مستحکیه از شمس حقیقت گردند و بعد اطاعت طلبند . امر شمس حقیقت و مرآت مستحکیه از او یعنی حضرت عبد البها آن بود که مرکز ولایت محفوظ بماند و در سلاله حضرت شوقی افندی ادامه یابد . روحیّه خانم میدانستند که نازا هستند و بواسطه ایشان تتبّع آن سلسله بهم خواهد خورد مع ذلک در طلب ریاست ازدواجرا قبول کردند و از نازائی خود کلمه نگفتند و سلسله را بهم زدند . اعظم از این گناهی نمیشود . ریاست جوئی خودرا بر اطاعت و انقیاد بخواست شمس حقیقت ترجیح دادند .

در صفحه ۱۴۱ کتاب خود روحیّه خانم مینویسد که اشتباه کلّی که " بسیاری از نفوس حتّی مجاورین ارض اقدس و ساکنین بیت مبارک را به امتحان انداخت بنحوی که معدودی از این ورطه امتحان بخوبی گذشتند علّت این شکست روحانی واضح است اینان در عالم خیال و تصوّر خود یک حضرت عبد البهائی دیگر را میخواستند و اراده داشتند یک سلسله آباء باسم ولیّ امر الله داشته باشند ولی نقشه الهی طرح ریزی دیگری داشت ". بعد خانم بطرح ریزی خود میپردازند ولی مطلبرا واضح نمیگردد و هنوز تفسیر میطلبد . این صورت آباء متسلسل که ایشان حقیقترا نفی مینمایند همان است که حضرت عبد البها در وصیّتنامه خود واضحا بیان میکنند و من بعد شوقی افندی چون مبیّن آیات الله تصویب کردند و بامید تحقّق آن ایشانرا در عقد نکاح درآوردند . ثانیا این تسلسل را حضرت عبد البها از خود ایجاد نکردند . چنانچه دیده شد بیانش در الواح مبارک جمال قدم مذکور است از جمله در نماز روزانه که شخص بهائی باید بگوید . حضرت عبد البها فقط ان مبدا را در شوقی افندی و ورثه ایشان مشخّص فرمودند . و جمال قدم این حقیقترا در جمیع ادیان سماوی مییابند . ظهور شمس حقیقت و در پی آن مرایای مستحکیه از آن حقیقت ابدی سرمدیست که در هر دوری ظاهر شده اگرچه نوع انسان انرا متابعت ننموده و برکنار گذاشته و باین سبب عالم انسانیرا بوحدت نرسانده . اگر ولایت در اسلام حفظ شده بود چنان پراکندگی حاصل نمیشد و وحدت دین الله مصون میماند . سوّم انکه واضع شریعت الله شمس حقیقت یعنی حضرت بهاء الله هستند و باید چنین مبدا را از تعالیم ایشان طلبید نه تخیّلات این خانم که منافی آن است . تفسیر حقیقی این مبدا وظیفه مبیّن ایات الله است یعنی مرآت مستحکی شمس حقیقت نه ایشان و یا بنده . فعلا انچه ایشان کردند و میخواهند صورت شرعی دهند این است که امر مبارکرا بی مبیّن گذاشته اند و کلام الله را دچار تفاسیر گوناگون و متضاد نموده اند .

روحیّه خانم از تنهائی و بیکسی و گریه ولیّ امر در خفا ذکر میکنند . حضرت عبد البها در وصیّتنامه خود

نمیفرمایند که باید افنان و انتساب در امور امریّه دخالت کنند و گرد حضرت شوقی افندی بمانند . بلکه میگویند که باید چون تلامید حضرت مسیح در اطراف دنیا پراکنده شوند و هریک بنوعی در نشر نفحات الله بکوشند . حول ولیّ امر باید ایادی، و منتخبین بهائیان عالم باشند و افراد عائله شخص ایشان . بعکسی حضرت شوقی افندی از نبودن چون بنده ای نبود . از نبودن اولاد و احفاد از خود ایشان بود . نبودن چنین وراث میراث مرغوب لا عدل له را کسی نماند که تسلسل دهد . وعلّت آن نازائی خود خانم است . و اگروالده حضرت شوقی افندی از ایشان بریدند سبب تاراندن خود ایشان بود . علّت بدای الهی نبود موقف ناشایسته و اعمال خود ایشان بود . بالجمله روحیّه خانم صبایای حضرت عبد البها را بگناهی محکوم میکنند که هیچ وقت ارتکاب نکردند . جمیع از اوّل مطیع و فرمانبردار و خادم صادق امر مبارک بودند و هریک بنوعی و بمنتها استطاعت و قابلیّت خود در خدمت حضرت شوقی افندی کوشیدند . و روح حضرت عبد البها بر آن شاهد و گواه است . و پس از درگذشت از این عالم هریک بجزای اعمال خود رسیده . سزاوار آن است که بر حقایق امو حاصل نکرده قضاوت نشود .

ضیائیّه خانم و اداره امر

حضرت ورقه مبارکه علیا بهیّه خانم روح مجسّم و مرمتمن خوبی و بردباری و مهر و محبّت بودند . هیچ کس این حقیقترا بهتر از نفوسی مانند خود بنده که در ظلّ آن محبّت پرورش یافته نمیدانند . عنایتشان در جمیع موارد سرشار بود . ولکن پس از صعود حضرت عبد البها در سنّی و حالی نبودند که جدّاً و فعلاً باداره امور امریّه بپردازند . ولی آن لطف و محبّت ایشانرا در جامعه بهائی موقف متعالی داده بود که کاملاً جالب و جاذب قلوب کرده بود . این سرمایه معنوی بود که در حفظ و صیانت و وحدت امر بکار گذارده شد . نام ایشان و محبّت یاران نسبت بایشان و جانفشانی آنان در اجرای دلخواه ایشان وحدت امر را در آن مرحله خطرناک محفوظ داشت . ولی در این مدّت ورقه مبارکه ضیائیّه خانم فعلاً اداره امر را میکردند . از یوم صعود حضرت عبد البها تا سنه ۱۹۳۷ که بنده در مرکز امر بخدمت مشغول بودم این حقیقت واقع بود . در آغاز زمانی که ولیّ امر اکثر اوقات خود را در اروپا میگذراندند جمیع امور امریّه زیر اداره و تدبیر شخص ضیائیّه خانم بود . و سال بسال و بتدریج این ترتیب تغییر کرد . هرچه ولیّ امر بیشتر بامور امریّه میپرداختند هرچه بیشتر ضیائیّه خانم برکنار میرفتند . و مسرور و مطمئن میشدند که ولیّ امر دلگرم کار شده اند . اگرچه این خدمت بزرگ را ضیائیّه خانم و سائر ورقات در ان مرحله سخت بامر مینمایند کلمه ای در آن موضوع روحیّه خانم در کتاب خود ذکر نمینمایند . جز سرزنش چیزی ندارند که اظهار دارند .

سفر حضرت شوقی افندی باکسفورد

پس از صعود حضرت عبد البها هر وقت فرصت مناسبی حاصل میشد و شخصی با معلومات کافی در حقوق و دستورهای ملّی یافت میگشت حضرت شوقی افندی وصیّتنامه مبارکرا مطرح بحث قرار میدادند و میپرسیدند

آیا طرح کافی شاملیست برای سازمانهای امر یا نه. هرکس آن وصیّتنامه را دید و خواند از کمالش اظهار تعجّب نمود. ولی فقط از جهت نظریّه صرف. ولی چون بموضوع تاسیس آن سازمانها میرسید متحیّر میماندند که چرا ان نظریّه را خود بحیّز عمل درنیاوردند و مانع چه بوده. بالاخص چون حالت امر در آن زمان چنین سازمانها میطلبید. حتّی تکرارا این سوءالرا از خود حضرت شوقی افندی در آن ایّام شنیدم. تا روزی ولیّ امر لوحی در اوراق مبارک یافتند. در آن لوح حضرت عبد البها میفرمایند که اگر ممکن بود خودشان بیت عدل را تاسیس میکردند و انچه قرار میداد اجرا میداشتند. ولی آیا در طول ایّام مرکز میثاق چنین فرصتی یافت نشد ؟

میدانیم که از صعود جمال قدم مدّتی نگذشت که در عکّا در اثر اقدامات ناقضین لجنه مفتّشین تعیین شد که از طرف حکومت وضع امر را جستجو نمایند. و بر اثر آن قلعه بندی سختتر شد. در ایران نیز احبّا در فشار زیاد بودند. در چنین مورد انتخاب محافل و تاسیس سازمانها، امری امکان نداشت. امر نه صورت ملّی داشت و نه بین المللی. فقط در مراکزی زیاد در شرق در کتمان نفوسی بتبلیغ مشغول بودند. چون حکومت ترکیّه دستوری شد و همه زندانیان سیاسی رهائی یافتند حضرت عبد البها وقت را غنیمت شمرده رهسپار اروپا و امریکا شدند و بنشر نفحات الله مشغول گشتند. در آن مرحله سفر و اعلان مبادی امر نیز مجال تاسیسات امریّه ممکن نبود. هنوز در غرب نفوسی یافت نمیشد که چنین اقداماتی کند و محافلی تشکیل دهد و چون حضرت عبد البها بارض مقدّس باز گشتند جنگ جهانی درگرفت و راه بشرق و غرب بکلّی مقطوع شد. و حکومت ترکیّه دوباره بر فشار و استنطاق و تفتیش بر آمد. بالجمله از حین صعود جمال قدم الی انتهای جنگ جهانگیر اوّلی یعنی تا وقت نگارش آن لوح حضرت عبد البها فعلا وقت مناسبی نیافتند که بتاسیساتی که در نظر داشتند بپردازند. در این مدّت نیز حضرت شوقی افندی که محور جمیع این تاسیسات تعیین شده بودند جوانی بودند هنوز در دانشگاه و حضرت عبد البها در انتظار که ایشان از تحصیلات خود فارغ شوند تا زمام امر را در دست گیرند و بخدمت بپردازند.

روحیّه خانم در کتاب خود میگویند که حضرت شوقی افندی "بتصمیم و اراده" حضرت عبد البها باکسفورد تشریف بردند ولکن چنین نیست. در جولای سنه ۱۹۱۸ حضرت شوقی افندی از دانشگاه امریکائی در بیروت فارغ التحصیل شدند و در اوائل سنه ۱۹۱۹ قصد نمودند که در انگلستان تحصیلات خود را ادامه دهند. چون از حضرت عبد البها اجازه طلبیدند ایشان قبول نفرمودند. پیری و ناتوانی بر هیکل مبارک مسلّط شده بود و کسی نبود که جای شوقی افندیرا بگیرد. چنان نیست که روحیّه خانم ذکر میکنند. بنده از تحصیلات خود فارغ نشده بودم در سال دوّم دانشگاه بودم. معلومات بنده کافی نبود که قابل آن وظیفه باشم. دوّم انکه وصیّت خود را مرقوم نموده بودند و حضرت شوقی افندیرا جانشین خود قرار داده بودند و میخواستند

ایشانرا شخصا در اداره امر تدریب نمایند و بآن آشنا سازند و ولایترا بتدریج تحویل دهند. وجود شخص دیگری مانند بنده جای ایشانرا نمیگرفت. فرمودند که اگر مقصود تقویت در لغت انگلیسی است و مهارت در ترجمه اسباب آنرا میشود در خود حیفا مهیّا ساخت. لزوم باکسفورد رفتن نیست. شوقی افندی به طبیب شخصی حضرت عبد البهاء دکتور یوفی مراجعه نمودند. او گفت که چندان جای نگرانی نیست. صحّت مبارک بالنسبه بسنّ ایشان خوب است و اگر بهمین منوال بماند شاید ده سال دیگر حیاتشان امتداد یابد. شوقی افندی باین کلام طبیب دستگیر شده اصرار در رفتن نمودند. ولی حضرت عبد البهاء اجازه نمیدادند تا مسیو هیپولیت دریفوس و همسرش مسز لورا بارنی بحیفا آمدند. چون موقفرا چنین دیدند و شوقی افندیرا بغایت عصبانی یافتند از حضور خواهش کردند که اجازه مرحمت فرمایند. حضرت عبد البهاء ناچار اجازه فرمودند ولی بشرط انکه شوقی افندی اوّل بمریضخانه "نوئی" رفته اعصاب خودرا معالجه نمایند و آرامش روانی یابند و بعد به اکسفورد روند. و رفتن ایشان سبب شد که حضرت عبد البهاء بشیراز مرقوم فرمودند و آقای عزیز الله خان بهادررا طلبیدند که در حضور بکتابت مشغول شوند. در هر صورت حضرت عبد البهاء از رفتن شوقی افندی خوشنود نبودند. حال اگر گفته شود که حضرت شوقی افندی "بتصمیم و اراده" حضرت عبد البهاء رفتند مسؤولیّت اوضاع امر بعد از صعود و آشوبی که برپا شد بر حضرت عبد البهاء میافتد که ابدا فکر بعد از خودرا نکردند و وفات ناگهانی که از مقتضیات حیات انسانی است در نظر نگرفتند. این بعد نظررا حضرت عبد البهاء کاملا داشتند ولی نتوانستند شوقی افندیرا مانع از رفتن شوند.

قبل از صعود مبارک بچند روزی در مدّتی که بنده در حضور بکتابت مشغول بودم ضیائیّه خانم از بنده پرسیدند اگر تازه‌ای رخ داده که حضرت عبد البهاء امر فرموده اند شوقی افندیرا تلغرافا بطلبیم بیاید. عرض کردم خبر تازه‌ای نیست فقط چند روز پیش حضرت عبد البهاء کتاب مناجاتی ببنده التفات فرمودند و امر دادند که هرجا ذکر نقض میثاق هست علامت گذاشته حضور تقدیم نمایم. و بعد لوح مفصّلی نازل فرمودند و بلحنی بغایت غمگین از درگاه الهی مسئلت میفرمایند که ایشانرا از این عالم رهائی دهد. و از یاران الهی میطلبند که در میثاق ثابت و مستقیم مانده. به بنده خطور نکرد که این لوح اشاره بقرب صعود مبارک است. ضیائیّه خانم فرمودند که باید اشکالی باشد که شوقی افندیرا بسرعت میخواهند بیاید. در ضمن بیم انرا داشتند که شوقی افندی موقف را درست نفهمیده ان امررا فورا تلبیت نکنند. لذا نامه ای نگاشته موقفرا درست بیان کردند و اصرار در مراجعت ایشان نمودند. دو روز بعد حضرت مولی الوری پرسیدند اگر تلغراف فرستاده شد. و چون ورقه مبارکه عرض کردند که در عوض نامه‌ای ارسال شد فرمودند که شوقی افندی بایشان نخواهند رسید.

ولایتی که حضرت عبد البهاء برای شوقی افندی مهیّا نمودند اقتضا نمیکرد که ایشان در آن مرحله باکسفورد بروند و فراغی در وقت انتقال حاصل شود و مصالح امریّه در خطر افتد. اگر حضرت شوقی افندی در حضور مبارک مانده بودند انتقال مرکز ولایت چنین دشوار نمیشد و چنانچه خود ایشان اعتراف میکنند "شلل" حاصل نمیشد. شوقی افندی برابر مسؤولیتهای گران سرگردان نمیماندند. رفتن و دوری ایشان اشکالات زیاد ایجاد کرد که حضرت عبد البهاء میخواستند جلوگیری کنند. و این حقیقترا نفوسی ادراک میکنند که در آن مرحله بر حقایق امور واقف بودند. و از هرکس بیشتر خود حضرت شوقی افندی بر آن آگاه بودند و گریه و انابه میکردند. نزد حضرت عبد البهاء شرمسار بودند که باوجود نافرمانی ولایت امر را بایشان واگذار کردند. در آن ایّام خود حضرت شوقی افندی این حقایقرا ذکر میکردند و اشك ندامت میریختند. حضرت عبد البهاء دلشکسته بودند و ورقه مبارکه نمیخواستند قلب مبارك بیشتر از نیامدن محتمل ایشان آزرده گردد. باری نتیجه این حوادث آن شد که بار گرانی بر دوش ایشان و سائر ورقات افتاد. و آنان تحمّل نمودند و کوشیدند تا آن مرحله بسلامت گذشت.

باری نقض عهد که روحیّه خانم بعائله نسبت میدهند یعنی چه؟ نقض عهد نقض پیمانیست که شمس حقیقت با افراد اتباع خود میبندد که پس از غروب قلوب بقمر ولایت رو کنند و از آن درخشنائی یابند. اینرا ورقات در ادقّ مرحله در تاریخ امر بهائی انجام دادند و از هیچ کس مزدی نطلبیدند ولی مذمّت و اهانت نیز توقّع نداشتند. در پایان زیارتنامه جمال قدم و حضرت ربّ اعلی این مناجات وارد شده میفرمایند "صلّ اللهمّ یا الهی علی السدرة و اوراقها و اغصانها و افنانها و اصولها و فروعها بدوام اسمائك الحسنی و صفاتك العلیا ثمّ احفظها من شرّ المعتدین و جنود الظالمین انّك انت المقتدر القدیر". یعنی صلوات بر اصول و فروع شجره مبارکه "بدوام اسمائك الحسنی و صفاتك العلیا" یعنی مادامیکه صفات الهی از آن اصول و فروع ظاهر و نمایان است. قریب پنجاه سال از صعود مبارك گذشته و سه نفر از آن چهار ورقات از این جهان درگذشتند. همگی از عالم امکان بودند و قصوراتی از آنان رخ داده. هیچ کس از این گونه گناهکاری بری نیست. همه ورقات از درگاه الهی طلب غفران کردند و امید بخشش داشتند. ولی نقض عهد ننمودند و در ادقّ مراحل در ایمان بشمس حقیقت و ولاء بمرکز میثاق و ولایت سستی نشان ندادند. سختی کشیدند ذلّت دیدند بیکس ماندند اهانت چشیدند ولی بیوفا بحضرت عبد البهاء و وصیّتنامه ایشان نبودند. همواره امید شان آن بوده که "اسماء حسنی و صفات علیا" از گفتار و کردارشان ظاهر گردد تا مورد رحمت ایزدی گردند.

مختصر انکه والده از روز صعود حضرت عبد البهاء الی یومی که بنده طرد شدم بسبب ضعف اعصاب قلب و معده بستری بودند و از نتایج آن بیماری این بود که تنهائی میطلبیدند. علّت طرد شان این بود که از

بنده تبرّی نجستند . روحا خانم طرد شدند چون حضرت عبد البهاء اظهار میل فرموده بودند که حضرت شوقی افندی مریم خانمرا بگیرند و روحا خانم در آن مصرّ بودند در صورتی که شوقی افندی روحیّه خانمرا ترجیح دادند . ضیائیّه خانمرا طاروندند چون در نازائی روحیّه خانم پر جستجو کردند و بحقیقت پی بردند . منوّر خانم طرد شدند چون وقتی که ضیائیّه خانم ببیت مبارك رجوع نمودند ایشان خواهر بزرگتر خودرا خوشآمد گفتند و در آغوش گرفتند و اظهار مسرّت کردند . اگر گناهی مثلا ارتکاب کردند مورد اطاعت بی چون چرا بود نه ایمان بشمس حقیقت و مرکز ولایت . خطای ایشان آن بود که چون شوقی افندی بنده را طرد کردند واجب دانستند که ایشان اطاعت کنند چون و چرا نگویند و از بنده تبرّی جویند . ولی اطاعت مرایای مستحکیه از شمس حقیقت وقتی واجب است که خود از مصدر وحی ملهم باشد و مبادی انرا خود اوّل پیروی نماید نه اغراض شخصیّه و امور دنیویّه مادّیه چنانچه سبب طرد بنده شد . در این امر محك و میزان ایمان بشمس حقیقت است نه اموری که حتّی صفت اخلاقی ندارد . چنانچه دیده شد حضرت بهاء الله در آغاز کتاب اقدس میفرمایند " انّ اوّل ما کتب الله علی العباد عرفان مشرق وحیه و مطلع امره الذی کان مقام نفسه فی عالم الامر و الخلق من فاز به قد فاز بکلّ الخیر و الذی منع انّه من اهل الضلال ولو یاتی بکل الاعمال ". ولی چنانچه ذکر شد روحیّه خانم باطاعت مرایای مستحکیه اسبقیّت میدهند (گوهر یکتا ص۱۸۴) . میگوید " کذا ولو انکه انسان از دیدار کامل محروم و ایمان هم نداشته باشد بایستی اطاعت کند ". اطاعت امر مرایای مستحکیه مشروط بآن است که مطابق کلام شمس حقیقت باشد و الّا خطاست . و هرکس اطاعترا بر ایمان اسبقیّت دهد خطا کرده و مستوجب اطاعت نیست . پیروی او پیروی خطاکار است و گناه نه پیروی شمس حقیقت و " کلّ الخیر " و مایه رستگاری . نفی هستی نمیدهد و تیری تجلّی نمینماید .

خداوند خواست خودرا بیان میکند و خیر بشررا اظهار میدارد و مایه فیروزی جهانیانرا اشکار میسازد . ولی در ضمن بنوع بشر آزادی میدهد که متابعت انرا نمایند و از ثمرات آن بهره برند یا اعراض کنند و بنتائج اعمال خود رسند . این روش اطاعت بیچون و چرا نمیخواهد بلکه معرفت کامل و آزادی در انتخاب و ایمان بکلام حقّ . اطاعت بیچون و چرا انسانرا آلتی بیهوش و بیاراده مینماید و از گفتار و کردار او صفت اخلاقیرا سلب میکند . ارزشی در اعمال او یافت نمیشود . بوجود این دانش و بینش و آزادی در انتخاب در این عالم امکان منتهای درجه عدالت است . بی چنین دانش داد داور یزدانی تحقّق نمییابد و مجری نمیگردد . انچه انسان پر نیاز است پرتو شمس حقیقت است نه اطاعت متولّیان . اطاعت باید " بدوام اسمائك الحسنی و صفاتك العلیا " در آنان باشد . در آبگینه دل آنان باید جز درخشانی یزدانی نموداری نباشد تا مایه رهبری گردد . تیرگی با اطاعت فقط تیرگی ایجاد میکند .

جمال قدم و حضرت عبد البهاء مانند حضرت رسول مرکز ولایتی گذاشتند و عهد و پیمان با بهائیان بستند که متوجّه بآن شوند و اگر نور الهی در آن یافتند بهره برند و انعکاس کنند. ورقات مبارکه این شیوه را متابعت نمودند و جهد کردند که غبار کدر بر خاطر حضرت شوقی افندی ننشیند تا شجر بارور گردند و بوظائف خود پردازند. این خلوص نیّتی است که از حقیقت امکانیّه میتوان طلبید. و امّا روحیّه خانم در طلب ریاست و جاه و منزلت نازائی خود را پنهان کردند بنوعی که دستگاه ولایت بکلّی پیچیده شد و حال در کتاب خود ذکر بدای الهی مینمایند تا آنچه واقع شد صورت شرعی دهند.

ولی زیان چنین رفتار در پیش است. آینده خواهد گفت که نتیجه آن بر عالمیان چه خواهد بود و چه اختلافاتی در هیکل امر خواهد ایجاد کرد.

ممانعت بنده از تبلیغ.

تبلیغ نشر «عرفان مشرق وحی و مطلع امر» الهیست در عالم امر و خلق. پخش رحمت منبسطه است بر افراد مجتمع انسانی. تا هر یک بمعرفت کمالات یزدانی رسیده بآن اقتدا کند. چنانچه ذکر شد رحمت منبسطه بر جمیع عالم پخش میشود. بآن نیروی آسمانی گیاه میروید حیوان جان مییابد و حرکت میکند و انسان پرورش روحانی مییابد. ولی هر چیز در این عالم امکان پس از پذیرفتن از آن فیض یزدانی باید افاضه کند و مایه زندگی و رهنمائی و رستگاری دیگران نیز گردد. در عالم انسانی نتیجه چنین فیض از مشرق وحی و مطلع امر باید صورت افاضه و گسترش دانش گردد تا همه از عرفان آن مظاهر الهی بهره‌مند گردند. این هدف و مرام تبلیغ است. مقصود آن نشر رحمت منبسطه است بر جهانیان. پس تبلیغ هدف اصلی است در وجود هر فردی در مجتمع انسانی. چنانچه رخشنائی میپذیرد و دانش میگیرد باید آنرا پخش کند و دسترس دیگران نماید. چنین تبلیغ نه فقط در انسانیّت افراد خمیره شده نه فقط حضرت ربّ اعلی در بیان و جمال قدم در اکثر الواح خود فرض کرده حضرت عبد البهاء در وصیّتنامه خود میفرمایند که افنان و اغصان باید بعد از خود در عالم پراکنده شوند و مانند حواریّین حضرت مسیح بتبلیغ مشغول شوند و سپس اضافه میفرمایند که اگر شخص یا محفلی ممانعت کند باید آنان اطاعت نکنند و در این وظیفه اصلی خود ادامه دهند. یعنی واضحا میفرمایند که در این مورد نه فقط حقّ نافرمانی دارند بلکه چنین نافرمانی از واجبات دینی آنان است. چنین تبلیغ از فعّالیّت منتها آرزوی بنده بوده و هست و دو مرتبه بپیروی آن موفّق شدم و باین قصد در اطراف ایالات متّحده و کندا مسافرت کردم و باندازه قابلیّت و استعداد خود موفّق شدم. اگر پیش از این انجام ندادم علّت گرفتاری بنده در خدمت حضرت شوقی در مرکز حیفا بود. و در آن ایّام پیشرفت امور در انجا اهمیّت داشت.

چندی بعد از طرد بنده زمانی که مقام اعلی بر دامنه کوه کرمل بصورت کامل آن ساخته میشد و جالب انظار

شده بود عدّه زیادی از یهود میخواستند اطّلاعاتی از مبادی امر حاصل نمایند از جمله خانمهائی که از دانشگاهها فارغ التحصیل شده بودند . رئیس انجمن انها که از دوستان قدیم همشیره بنده بود و میدانست که در امریکا چندی بتبلیغ مشغول بودم مرا دعوت کرد که نطقی در آن انجمن دهم . بنده بکمال افتخار دعوترا پذیرفتم و در وقت معیّن صحبت کردم . ولی چون از تالار خارج شدم آقای محمّد بهائی و آقای منصور که در آن زمان در بیت مبارک بخدمت مشغول بودند مقابل جمیع پیش آمدند و تف در صورت من کردند و مشتی بگوشم زدند و گفتند "تو که دشمن امری نطق در آن خصوص میکنی ". اوّلا همیشه در ایمان خود ثابت و راسخ بوده و هستم و در عقیده خود بشمس حقیقت و ولایت پایدار . هیچ امری مرا متزلزل نکرده و نمیکند . در این صورت چرا "عرفانی که تحصیل کرده و از آن بهره برده بدیگران ندهم ؟ آیا از رحمت منبسطه الهی نصیب موفوری نبرده ام ؟ آیا بر من واجب نیست که از آن پرتو بمقدار استعداد و قابلیّت خود بسائرین تقدیم ننمایم ؟ آیا بصفتم هم افنان و هم از اغصان باید بگذارم احدی مرا از تبلیغ ممانعت کند ؟

تبلیغ منحصر به گفتار و بیان شفاهی نمیباشد . پیام الهیرا میتوان بصورت بهتر بکتابت بیان و تبلیغ نمود . در چنین مورد دوری از مجتمع و تنهائی مناسبتر است . لذا از همه دوری جستم و اوقات خود را مصروف کتابت نمودم . چندین جلد کتاب تا بحال طبع و نشر کرده ام و عددی نوشته ام مجهّز و حاضر برای است . مضمون همه یا مستقیما و یا بصورت غیر مستقیم تعالیم مبارک جمال قدم است . و مستنداتم از الواح . از این چه ضرّی بامر میرسد که بهائیان نوشته های مرا در قائمه سیاه خود گذاشته اند و نفوسرا از قرائت آن ممانعت میکنند . تحرّی حقیقت اوّل قدم سالک سبیل الهیست . چنانچه در آغاز هفت وادی جمال قدم میفرمایند "هیچ بندی ایشانرا منع ننماید و هیچ پندی سد نکند" . تحرّی حقیقت و آزادی فکر و جستجو از مبادی اساسی امر است. حضرت عبد البها رساله ای بعنوان "سیاسیّه" در این موضوع مرقوم فرموده اند که در وقت حاضر بآن دسترسی ندارم تا به فقرات آن استناد کنم . ولی بهمان مضمون در لوح جمال قدم بشیخ سلمان موجود است . میفرمایند "باری ای سلمان بر احبّای حقّ القا کن که در کلمات احدی بدیده اعتراض ملاحظه منمائید بلکه بدیده شفقت و مرحمت مشاهده کنید . مگر آن نفوسیکه الیوم در ردّ الله الواح ناریّه نوشته . بر جمیع نفوس حتم است که بر ردّ من ردّ علی الله انچه قادر باشند بنویسند . کذلك قدّر من لدن مقتدر قدیر . چه که الیوم نصرت حقّ بذکر و بیان است نه بسیف و امثال آن . کذلك نزّلنا من قبل و حینئذ ان انتم تعرفون . فوالذی ینطق حینئذ فی کلّ شیئ بانّه لا اله الّا هو که اگر نفسی در ردّ من ردّ علی الله کلمه مرقوم دارد مقامی باو عنایت شود که جمیع اهل ملا اعلی حسرت آن مقام برند و جمیع اقلام ممکنات از ذکر آن مقام عاجز و السن کائنات از وصفش قاصر . چه که هر نفسی الیوم بر این امر اقدس ارفع امنع مستقیم شود مقابل است با کلّ من فی السموات و الارض . و کان الله علی ذلك لشهید و علیم . ان یا احبّاء الله لا تستقرّوا علی فراش الراحة و اذا عرفتم بارئکم و سمعتم ما ورد علیه قوموا

علی النصر ثمّ انطقوا و لا تصمتوا اقلّ من آن . و انّ هذا خیر لکم عن کنوز ما کان و ما یکون لو انتم من العارفین . این است نصح قلم اعلی عباد الله را ". در مقام دیگر میفرمایند " از قراریکه استماع شد بعضی الواح ناریّه آن بالله را احبّاء الله سوخته اند . اگر چه این فعل من غیر اذن واقع شده و لکن چون حبّاً لله بوده عفی الله عمّا سلف و لکن ابدا محبوب نیست عند الله که کلمات احدی محو شود ".

از این بیانات مبارك چنین مستفاد میشود که بر کلمات احدی بدیده اعتراض نباید نظر کرد مگر انکه ردّی بر امر و مبادی آن باشد . در چنین صورت نباید آن نوشته هارا محو کرد بلکه حفظ نمود و خواند و انتقاد کرد تا حقیقت نمایان گردد . و این روش نه فقط فرض است بر هر فردی از افراد مؤمنین بلکه اعظم خدمتیست بامر الله . مثلا امروز مایه گمراهی جوانان الحادیست که در اروپا و امریکا رواج یافته است . چنین الحاد منافی مبادی امر است و ردّ بر آن فرض است بر هر نویسنده بهائی . کتاب من بعنوان " رشته فکر در فلسفه وجودیّت " جواب امر است بر آن الحاد . و همچنین کتاب بنده در نفوذ زردشت بر فکر یونان بیان و تبیان حقیقتیست که حضرت بهاء الله در لوح حکمت ذکر میفرمایند و آن مبدئی که فلسفه از ادیان سماویّه اقتباس کرده . پس چرا بهائیان باید از خواندن آن تجنّب جویند و احتراز کنند ؟ باید بخوانند و اگر در آن منافی با مبادی امر چیزی یافت میشود بر آن ردّ نویسند تا حقیقت نمایان گردد . و این اعظم خدمتی بامر خواهد بود . امتناع از خواندن تحرّی حقیقت نیست و خدمت بامر نه .

منع بنده از زیارت مقامات مقدّسه

پس از طرد یك اشکال بنده زیارت مقام اعلی در حیفا و روضه مبارکه در بهجی بود . نمیخواستم در چنین مورد سبب انزعاج احدی شوم . لذا مقام اعلی را از کوچهای که در جنوب مرقد مبارك است زیارت میکردم و زیارتنامه را میخواندم . اقتدا بحضرت عبد البهاء مینمودم که ایّام قلعهبندی از بالای دیوار قشله رو ببهجی کرده زیارتنامه را قرائت میکردند . روزی خواستم که بزیارت عتبه مبارکه در بهجی فائز شوم تا در خلوت آن نقعه مبارکه مقدّسه راز خود را گویم و بحضرت بهاء الله توسّل جسته عفو بر گناهانم طلبم . ایّام تابستان بود و حضرت ولیّ امر با روحیّه خانم در اروپا تشریف داشتند . فرصترا غنیمت شمرده روزی صبح زود رفتم و از دربان روضه مبارکه طلبیدم که اجازه دخول دهد . قریب یك ساعت شاید بیشتر تنها به گریه و انابه گذراندم و بعد بحیفا مراجعت نمودم . چند روزی نگذشت که آقای منصور به بنده منزل آمده گفتند که روحیّه خانم ایشانرا فرستاده که بمن ابلاغ کند که اگر دوباره بزیارت روضه مبارکه روم امر داده شده که مرا کتك زنند و بیرون کنند . گمان نکنم که در مذهبی جز کاتولیك شخص که از طرف کنیسه محروم گشته نمیتواند داخل معبد شود که عبادت کند .

در اول ورود بنده بایران بواسطه‌ای اجازه طلبیدم که بیت مبارك در شیراز و محلات مقدسه امریه دیگر را زیارت کنم . اذن صادر نشد . لذا بنده خودداری نمودم تا مایه ناراحتی احدی نشوم . ولی حضرت اعلی در بیان فارسی میفرمایند " الباب الرابع والعشر من الواحد الرابع فی انّ من یستجیر بتلك البقاع یامن و یعفی عنه بما قد عفی الله عنه . ملخّص این باب انکه هر کس پناه برد ببقاع حروف واحد حقّ است بر مردم که اورا پناه دهند . زیرا که این اراضی در کلّ ارض مظهر یجیر و لا یجار علیه است . و در باب بعد میفرمایند " فوانّ
ان یمنع احد
لا یجوز لاحد اذا اراد ان یستجیر بتلك البقاع . ملخّص این باب انکه اگر کسی خواهد پناه برد بمقاعد مرتفعه بر کسی جائز نیست که اورا منع کند و از او مرتفع میگردد تسلّط نفسی بر او ".

بموجب این فقرات حقّ که شمس حقیقت ببنده عنایت میکند که پناه و بصورت اهمّ زیارت بقاع مقدّسه کنم احدی نمیتواند مرا از آن سلب کند . و اگر محفل بخواهد مرا محروم کند و چنین امری بدهد فورا سلطه او زائل میگردد و واجب الاطاعه نمیماند . چه‌که اطاعت محفل روحانی یا بیت عدل در صورتیست که موافق با مبادی شمس حقیقت باشد نه منافع با آن . وحی الهی در هر مورد اسبقیّت دارد و فقط امر شمس حقیقت مشروط بشروطی نیست . امر خود محفل روحانی و یا بیت عدل مشروط است . چه که امر مرایای مستحکیه است . و این مبدا را چنانچه ملاحظه شد حضرت بهاء الله در لوح شمس حقیقت و لوح یافتخار شیخ سلمان واضحا بیان میفرمایند . بالجمله چنانچه حضرت ربّ اعلی میفرمایند پناهنده "یجیر و لا یجار علیه" . یعنی بر علیه پناهنده پناهی نیست .

وقتی در یکی از عرایض خود حضور حضرت شوقی افندی صورت این مناجاترا ارسال داشتم که حال روانی مرا کاملا بیان مینود . ان مناجات جمال قدم ورد زبانم بود و هنوز گاهی میخوانم و آرامش جان میابم . میفرمایند " باسم ربّنا العلیّ الاعلی . اتحرم یا الهی من اقبل الی حرم ذاتك . اتبعد یا محبوبی من استجار الی مدینة قربك . اتخذل یا رجائی من تمسّك بحبل عزّك . اتضع یا مقصودی من ورد فی شریعة عطائك . اتفقر یا معبودی من تشبّث بذیل غنائك . اتمیت یا مسجودی من احییت قلبه بنور عرفانك . اتصمّ یا مشکوری من اسمعته بدایع آیاتك . لا فوعزّتك . لا تحرم من اقبل الیك . ولا تطرد من ورد علیك . و لا تردّ من نزل بفنائك . اذ انّك انت
والمعطی لکلّ شیء
المتعالی فوق کلّ شیء و الحاکم علی کلّ شیء فی السموات و الارض . و انّك انت العزیز الممتنع القدّوس ".

بیش از این عرض و جسارتی نیست

فانی

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